

MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE, CHARACTER, EXPERIENCES,
AND
MINISTRY,
OF
THE LATE REV. WILLIAM THOMPSON,
OF BOSTON IN LINCOLNSHIRE;

WHO DIED
February 7th, 1794, in the Fifty-ninth Year of his Age.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
A Discourse on 2 Cor. xiii. 11. occasioned by his
Death; and recommended to the Church over
which he presided, as the Advice of a dying *Pastor*.

BY D. TAYLOR.

*“ Remember those, who having presided over you, have
“ spoken to you the Word of God; whose faith imitate,
“ considering the end of their Conversation.*

Heb. xiii. 7. (Dr. Doddridge's Translation.)

L O N D O N.

Printed by R. HAWES, and Sold by the AUTHOR,
No. 20, Mile-End-Road; W. BUTTON, Paternoster-
Row; T. KNOTT, Lombard-Street; J. MARSON, High-
Holborn; and B. POLLARD, Quorndon, Leicestershire.

MDCCXCVI.



P R E F A C E.

THE Author of the following Discourse and Memoirs had the happiness to commence an acquaintance with Mr. THOMPSON in the year 1763, which was continued to his death. Few intimacies, considering the distance of situations, could be more cordial or less interrupted, for so many years.

A considerable time before Mr. THOMPSON's death, we mutually agreed, that whoever should be first taken away, the survivor should preach and publish a Sermon on the occasion, from 2 Cor. xiii. 11. and address it particularly to that church which should lose its pastor, in hopes that it might also be acceptable and useful to other churches. It was at the same time agreed that a few Memoirs of the deceased should be published with the Funeral Discourse.

It

It has pleased God, that by the removal of my much esteemed Brother, this work should devolve upon me. But on account of my residence in London, so far distant from Boston, and the distresses of my family at the time of Mr Thompson's death, it was very inconvenient for me to make a journey to Boston. Mr. Thompson was therefore kind enough, before his death, to excuse my absence from Boston ; and to request the Rev. Mr. BURGESS to deliver a Sermon to the people on that occasion, from the passage of Scripture above-mentioned. He nevertheless expressed his desire (in a note fixed in his diary) that I would publish a discourse on the occasion, according to our agreement ; and ordered his Diary, consisting of three considerable volumes, to be sent to me for the purpose of extracting from it such an account of his life, experiences, and character, as might appear convenient for publication. In this request, the mourning Family and Church of my deceased Friend united ; and it would have given me great pleasure to have obliged them much sooner, had not the afflictions

afflictions of my family, and various avocations rendered it impracticable.

Mr. Thompson's Diary includes a vast number of Anecdotes and Observations, from the year 1761 to 1794. The difficulty of selecting Extracts for the purpose of publication, from so large a work, sufficiently diversified, yet not too numerous, is obvious to men of understanding. A person who keeps a Diary is frequently struck with many things at the time, which are afterwards of little importance to the Reader. There is also a sameness in all works of this kind, which renders the business of selecting for the Public still more difficult. It has been attempted, however, to mark a few passages, sufficient to delineate the character of the deceased; and sufficiently distinct and diversified to give entertainment and profit to the Reader.

However partial the compiler may be to the memory of his departed Friend, he cannot but think that the Reader, who has a taste for genuine godliness, will observe some excellencies in Mr. Thompson's character truly worthy of imitation.

He, therefore, ventures to recommend them, especially to young ministers of every denomination, for whom it appears they were chiefly designed, and with a view to whose benefit they are now published.

I am not conscious of having changed one idea which Mr. Thompson's words suggest ; nor of having made any alterations, unless a few in the manner of expression, which I am persuaded he would himself have made, or, at least, have admitted, had they been submitted to his judgment. Every one must know, that when a writer pens down the effusions of his own heart, or anecdotes of persons and occurrences, chiefly for his own use, he pays little regard to style and composition.

That the blessing of God may accompany the reading, both of the Memoirs and the Discourse which precedes them, to the spiritual advantage of the Reader, is the prayer of,

THE COMPILER.

The good Pastor's last Advice to his People.

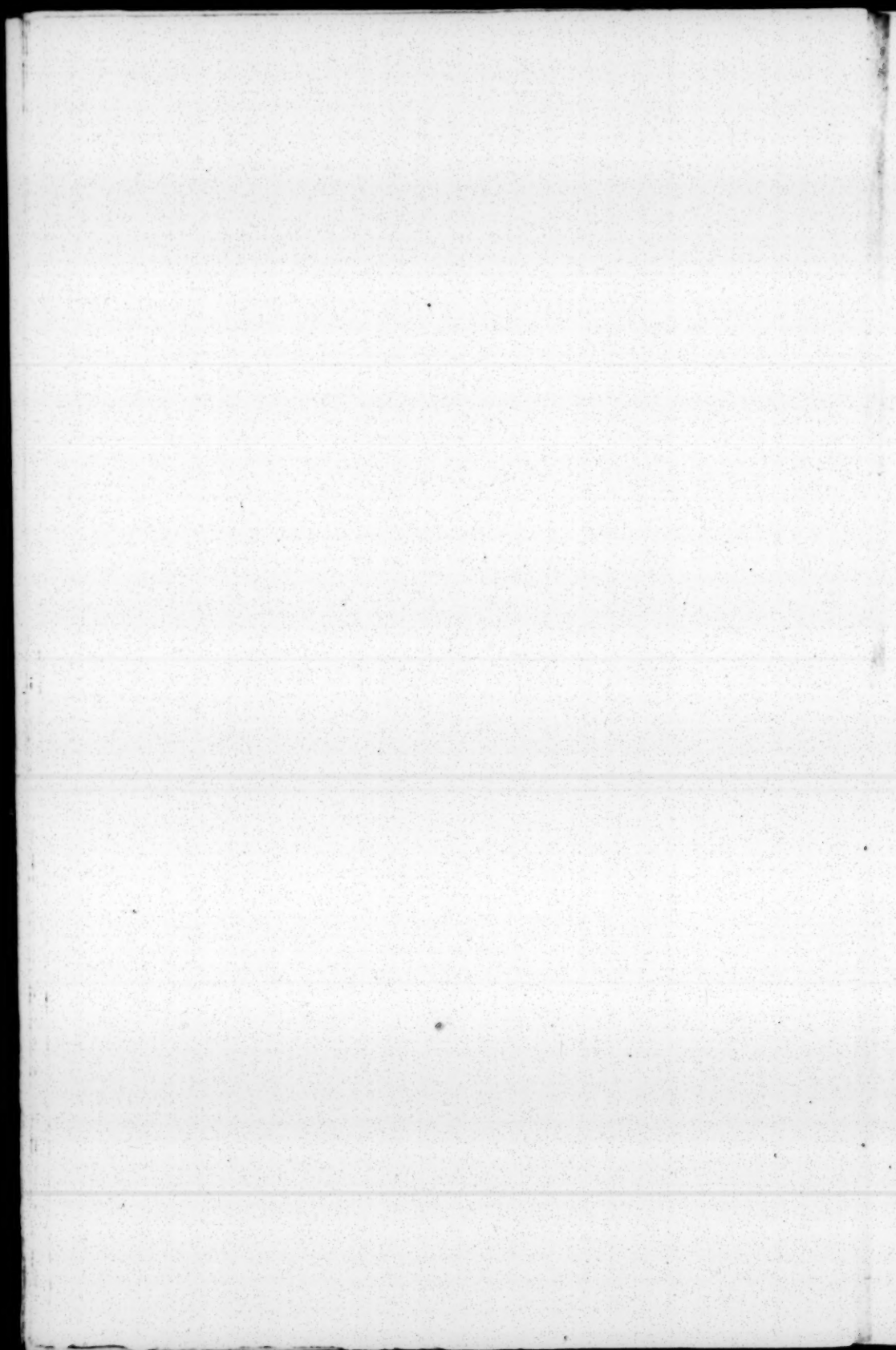
A

DISCOURSE

On 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

Addressed to the GENERAL-BAPTIST CHURCH,

AT BOSTON IN LINCOLNSHIRE.



A DISCOURSE, &c.

2 Cor. xiii. 11.

FINALLY BRETHREN, FAREWEL : BE PERFECT ; BE OF GOOD COMFORT ; BE OF ONE MIND, LIVE IN PEACE ; AND THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE SHALL BE WITH YOU.

MY DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN,

AT the request of your late worthy Pastor, I recommend the passage which stands at the head of this Discourse, to your serious attention, as his dying advice ; persuaded that if you faithfully observe it, and reduce it to practice, you will be a happy people, under the smiles of your heavenly Father. But if you neglect it, you must feel the injury which results from such neglect. Excuse me, on this serious occasion, if, deeply sensible of the fidelity I owe to your departed Minister, and gratefully affectionate towards you, I say to each individual,

individual, and to you all, as a collective body, in allusion to the words of Solomon, *If you are so wise as to treasure up this sacred advice in your hearts, and exemplify it in your lives, you will indeed be wise for yourselves*; the precious promise connected with it, will certainly be fulfilled to you: *but if you scorn it, and treat it with indifference, you alone must bear it, and all the tremendous consequences of such indifference, will inevitably fall upon yourselves.*

Important as the observations suggested by the context are, we omit them, for the sake of brevity; and hasten to consider—The affectionate salutation with which the exhortation in the text is introduced—The exhortation itself—and the powerful motive by which it is enforced.

I. The affectionate salutation with which the exhortation in the Text is introduced; *Finally, Brethren, farewell.*

Finally: Paul had preached among the Corinthians eighteen months, with considerable success, before he wrote these two epistles to them†; and after he had written them, he appears to have made them a second visit||. We are not, therefore, to conclude that he meant, by this expression, to signify that he was now taking his final leave of that people. But the
exhortation

† Acts xviii. 1—12. || Acts xx. 2.

exhortation here given is, at all times very important, especially when considered as the last advice of a faithful minister. Thus your late Pastor wished you to consider it as coming from him : He has now taken his *final* leave of you ; and impressed with the vast consequence of this advice, he requests it of you, with his dying lips, shall I say ? Rather, might I not be excused in saying, he *being dead, yet speaketh*, and calls upon you, as it were, from the mansions of the dead, by the pen of a surviving friend ! He conjures you, as you would prosper in this world, or meet him with comfort at the Tribunal of Christ, at the great day, that you conscientiously reduce to practice the exhortation which Paul has here given the Corinthian Church ; and which it is my business, in this discourse, to explain and recommend to you.

It will certainly be worthy of your attention, that you are marked in this salutation, with the most endearing appellation. The Apostle addressed the Corinthians as his *Brethren* ; and your departed Minister wished you to be addressed as having stood in that tender relation to him. You will testify, that during a course of more than thirty years, he has laboured among you, as a Brother, and endeavoured to promote your spiritual and everlasting welfare, as those that were *dear unto him*. However superior he was, in various respects, to many of
you

you, he assumed no forbidding airs. He kept you at no unbecoming distance. You had free access to him, as to a brother. He spake to you, and treated you with *Brotherly kindness*.

Though it does not appear to be here, the design of the Apostle, to express the relation in which all real Christians stand to the blessed Jesus, and to one another; yet this thought is so pleasing, so important, and so naturally connected with your relation to your Minister, that, I am persuaded you will excuse me in making mention of it.

Let it, therefore, be continually remembered, my dear friends, that all real Christians among you are indeed the brethren of Jesus Christ. He is the "first-born among many brethren†." All true believers are "joint-heirs" with him‡, and shall soon reign with him in his glory. How ought this consideration to confirm your faith, to encourage your hearts in your present, and in all your future trials! Jesus *careth for you*! How tenderly concerned ought you to be for the interest and honour of the Son of God, who graciously condescends to speak of himself as your elder Brother!

Remember, too, that *you* stand in the relation of *Brethren* to one another, born of the same *incorruptible seed, the word of God, which by the gospel*

† Rom. viii. 29. ‡ Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 7.

Gospel, is preached unto you†, heirs of the same glory, you shall, in due time, *sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God* ||. See that you love one another, with pure hearts, fervently§. “*Love as brethren ;*” and always give that best of evidences that you are the genuine disciples of Jesus Christ, that “*you love one another.*”

The Apostle, who is now concluding a second instructive and affectionate letter to his Corinthian Brethren, expresses his ardent desire of their welfare and prosperity. This seems to be the most natural and obvious signification of the word *Farewell*. Nor could any single term more fully express the affectionate wishes of your late worthy Pastor towards his dear People. Your prosperity, especially your spiritual prosperity, lay near his heart, both living and dying. O that his ardent breathings for your welfare may be answered in your future comfort in this world, and the consummate felicity of every individual among you in the next.

All our happiness for time and eternity, is the free gift of God. This is implied in the text before us. This we are taught through-

B

out

† 1 Pet. i. 23. 25. || Mat. viii. 11. § 1 Pet. i. 22.

out the Scriptures. But is it not likewise fully manifest from the words now under our consideration, and equally clear from the general tenor of Scripture, that God has connected the means and the end? Never therefore expect that the end shall be obtained if the means be neglected. If you wish to *fare well*; if you wish to be prosperous and happy, as a church, or as individuals, by divine assistance, be resolutely determined, to observe the directions contained in the *exhortation*—Which I am,

In the SECOND place, to illustrate and recommend to your serious attention. “Be perfect; be of good comfort; be of one mind; live in peace.” These duties, brethren, are here enjoined, as the means of your prosperity; to which, if you pay a diligent and uniform regard, the “God of love and peace shall be with you.”

1. You are called to *be perfect*. The word here used, has a peculiar signification. The design of it in this passage, may, I apprehend, be sufficiently ascertained by considering the state of the Corinthian Church—the import of the word itself—and the use and signification of it in other places.

At the time when this Epistle was written, the Corinthian Church appears to have been in

a disordered state†. Corinth was a very flourishing City, conveniently situated for commerce, and abounding in riches; which are seldom favourable to the spirit and practice of Christianity. Nor are former habits always speedily eradicated. Corinth was infamous for luxury, lewdness, and every kind of vice; and it appears that even some of the Christians themselves, were far from being entirely purified from all the immoralities for which the city was infamous. These immoralities occasioned several disorders in the Church, which it is evidently the design of this Epistle to correct. In the Church were parties and factions,

B 2

which

† See Cradock's Apostolical History, Benson's Plantation of Christianity, Doddridge's Family Expositor, and others, on the Epistle; and the Epistle itself throughout.

A sensible and pious Writer, who is now favouring the World with "An Ecclesiastical History on a new Plan," makes the following pertinent observations on the Church at Corinth. "Perhaps no Church was more numerous, and none less holy in the Apostolic age.—They were proud of gifts, contentious, self-conceited, and warm Partizans for Paul, Apollos, or Peter; and by the indulgence of this Spirit, shewed how little they had learnt of true Wisdom. Which gives the Apostle occasion to recommend the Wisdom that is from above, to point out the nature and properties of spiritual understanding, and to pour a just contempt on that which is merely natural." Milner's History of the Church of Christ, vol. 1. p. 83.

which produced animosities and contentions||. These the Apostle freely exposes, in the four first chapters of the former Epistle, and occasionally in other places.

One had been guilty of the abominable sin of incest; and the Corinthian brethren seem not to have treated that *wicked person* with the holy severity which so atrocious a crime deserved. On the conduct of this unhappy man, and on the conduct of the church, the Apostle animadverts in the fifth chapter.

They too much indulged a *litigious* disposition; even so far as to commence prosecutions against one another, in heathen courts of law. Paul censures this practice in the sixth chapter. In their heathen state they had been addicted to *fornication*: and some of them seem not to have been sufficiently sensible of the evil of it, even after they had embraced Christianity. This evil Paul exposes in the latter part of the same chapter.

You, brethren, and all attentive readers, must have observed, that the Corinthians were ignorant and irregular, in several other respects. The Apostle employs a considerable part of these two Epistles, in giving them instruction, admonition, and reproof, for the correction of these

these irregularities. The instances I pass by, for the sake of brevity. It is natural to consider the passage before us, as containing a kind of summary of those duties to which it was necessary for them to attend as a church, especially in present circumstances. If it appear from other considerations, that the first part of this exhortation has reference to their state, as a church, rather than to the general purity of their minds and conduct, as individuals, it will be reasonable so to understand the direction, *be perfect*.

Now this will further appear, by considering the native and original import of the word here used; and its use and application in other parts of Scripture. It is allowed that the word signifies to be *compacted, or united together*, as the members of a body, or as the parts of a building†. Thus it is opposed to disorder, and requires that every part or member stand in its place; and be ready to perform the duties for which it is designed.

In Heb. x. 5, “a body hast thou *prepared* me;” and Heb. xi. 3. “the worlds were *framed* by the word of God;” it evidently signifies to *adjust, or dispose*. So the great Creator of all things,

† Leigh, Parkhurst, and others, on the word *κοτᾶρῆζω* which is a very different word from *τελειόω*, to have *finished or completed*.

things, disposed the several parts of the Creation, adjusted them to the purposes for which they were designed ; and united them together in the exactest manner, to form one grand whole, for the display of his glory, and for the benefit of man. God *prepared*, or *fitted* a suitable body for his dear Son, that he might, in our nature, accomplish the glorious work of our Redemption, by “ bearing our sins, in his own body on the tree.” In Rom. ix. 22. it is rendered *fitted*†. Sinners hardened in unbelief, by frequent slights, offered to the gospel, are brought into such a condition, that they are fit for nothing, but to be banished from God and happiness, without hope, to all eternity. In all these passages, the same Greek word is used, which is rendered in our text *perfect*. According to this application of the term, “ the exhortation seems to signify, “ Take
 “ care that all your minds be always prepared
 “ to do and suffer the will of God ; and to
 “ have real communion with him, and with
 “ each other, in all gospel ordinances : Con-
 “ tinually endeavour that every thing contrary
 “ to genuine rectitude of heart and behaviour
 “ be avoided ; or, should any thing inconsis-
 “ tent with such rectitude, at any time pre-
 “ vail, or now exist, take care that it be im-
 “ mediately corrected.”

In

† Vessels of wrath, *fitted* to destruction.

In this sense brethren, consider your late honoured Pastor, though *dead*, as *yet speaking* to you. His whole conversation while among you, and the general tenor of his Diary, prove, that this was the breathing of his spirit in your behalf; and that nothing could give him more pain than the contrary. At his request, I would, with all possible seriousness, exhort you to take care that you make it your constant endeavour, by divine assistance, to preserve the rectitude above recommended.

In several places it signifies to *reſit*, *repair*, or *reſtore*. Mat. iv. 21. Mark i. 19. They were *mending*, or repairing their nets. Gal. vi. 1. If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, *reſtore* ſuch an one†. If we underſtand the term under conſideration in this ſenſe, we ſuppoſe Paul to exhort to the following purpoſe: “If any contention, animoſity, or diſcord, have taken place among you, take care that the breach may be healed, and that you all may be united in peace and love.” This agrees with the ſenſe, and nearly with the tranſlation, of the ſame greek word in the former Epistle, i. 10. That ye be *perfectly joined together*; in oppoſition to ſchiſms and contentions, from which the Apoſtle is there diſſuading them

† The original word rendered reſtore, properly ſignifies to reduce and recover any thing to its former and original ſtate of perfection. Dr. Chandler on Gal. vi. 1.

them. To understand the word in the same sense, in the passage before us, is also perfectly agreeable to one apparent design of both the Epistles. Thus we may collect into one view the important lessons taught by the Apostle in this branch of the exhortation: and may you, brethren, and all the Churches of Christ, diligently attend to them.

“ BE PERFECT. Be well *adjusted, disposed, and regulated*, in the knowledge of divine truth, and the cultivation of peace and love. Maintain a kind regard for one another. Take care that your tempers and lives be regulated by the word of Christ. Let no alienation from each other, which has taken place in any of your minds, be suffered to continue, but immediately endeavour to repair all breaches, and to heal all differences among yourselves. Let every one fill his own place, and attend to the duties of his own station, with propriety and diligence, to the honour of our Redeemer.”

In these instances, beloved Brethren, you are taught by the Apostle, and intreated by your dear departed Pastor, to *be perfect*; to be regular, uniform and harmonious, as becomes a church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. *Be of good comfort.* Whatever you may be called to suffer, whatever trials you may have to pass through, do not be discouraged. God will help you. Labour, therefore,

fore, to maintain that holy cheerfulness of mind which the gospel inspires, for the honour of your Redeemer, the glorious Author of it.

The people of God have abundant reason, at all times, and in all conditions, to be comfortable and cheerful. Their relation to God, as his children, his tender mercy to them, and unchanging care of them†; his infinite perfections, his many great and precious promises, the scripture account of what he has done for others, the recollection of what he has done for them; with the prospect of an eternal heaven, to which his grace will soon bring them, are all sufficient reasons for their joy and comfort, amidst the deepest distresses, they may have to meet with, in this vale of tears.

Yet many things in this world, tend to obstruct and diminish their comforts. Against which, brethren, you will maintain a constant watch; and under which, I trust, you will meditate on the considerations I have just now mentioned.—The common disorders of body and mind to which you, as well as others, are liable; many disappointments in your secular pursuits; national calamities; family trials, from the disagreeable tempers of children, and other dependants; vexations, arising from the conduct of natural relatives, and sometimes of religious

† Psalm ciii. 13. 1 Pet. v. 7.

religious friends ; with many attacks of Satan, and corruptions of human nature ; all these are sources of distress, while you pass through the present life ; and, unless faith be steadily exercised on its proper object, will sometimes damp your spirits, and greatly diminish your consolations.

It is, however, the duty and the interest of all real Christians to *be of good comfort*, continually, whatever their circumstances and trials are. Nor is this impracticable. By the grace of God, they may even “glory in tribulations†.” As a duty, it is recommended in the passage before us. In other passages they are exhorted to “rejoice evermore,” and to “rejoice in the Lord always.”

The considerations which demonstrate the importance of this duty are various and important. It discovers the power of faith, and “gives glory to God||.” It does honour to the gospel, by proving the tendency and supporting effect which the truths and promises of it have upon the minds of true believers. It sometimes convinces and confounds the opposers of the gospel ; and shews them that there is something in christianity, with which they are unacquainted. It presents an amiable example before young professors, and weak and afflicted

† Rom. v. 3. Phil. iv. 4. || 1 Thess. v. 16. || Rom. iv. 20.

afflicted christians; by which they are not only directed, but comforted and encouraged. By such a state of mind, you are better prepared for the duties of religion and of civil life; and to grapple with the difficulties which attend all situations of men in this life. By a comfortable and serene state of mind, we are also more agreeable companions to all our associates in every connection. A cheerful disposition even contributes to health of body; it “doth good, like a medicine†.” There are many reasons, therefore, why christians should endeavour to *be of good comfort.*

A comfortable, cheerful state of mind, with every other good, is to be obtained, preserved, and promoted in the use of *means.*

The first of these means, which is, indeed, fundamental to all the rest, is to “prove your own selves‡,” that you may have clear evidence of your interest in Jesus Christ, and your title to heaven. Till this great point be settled, you have no ground for comfort. How can you be cheerful or have the least consolation while your fellow-creatures are dying on every side, while you yourselves are on the brink of the grave; and have no evidence of your title to glory? but on the other hand, have reason
to

† Prov. xvii. 22. ‡ 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

to suspect at least, that you are, every moment, on the borders of eternal damnation? You have no clear, satisfying, scripture evidence that if you should die this night, as you very possibly may, you would not "lift up your eyes in hell, being in torments," without relief, and without hope§.

Fears of this dreadful nature ought to alarm you, till you have scriptural evidence that you are pardoned and regenerated, and thus savingly interested in that Jesus, who alone "delivereth us from the wrath to come†." Begin then, immediately, the necessary work of self-examination by the infallible word of God. When this great point is settled, to the satisfaction of your own mind, you may "rejoice in hope of the glory of God‡." You have a consolation that none can take from you.

Meditate much on the Divine perfections, and on the precious promises contained in the Scriptures. These administer great consolation to the believing mind. The power, wisdom and goodness of God; his tender regard for his children in all their various trials; his exceeding great and precious promises, so wonderfully adapted to every condition of the bodies and souls of his people, both in life and death,

§ Luke xvi. 23. † 1 Thes. i. 10. ‡ Rom. v. 2.

death, are animating and comforting subjects. Let them be the subjects of your frequent contemplation, that you may always *be of good comfort*.

Often recollect what God has done *for* you, and in you; and the treasures of glory that he has in reserve for you in heaven. He has given his Son to die for your sins. This grand fact is frequently declared in the gospel, and is fundamental to all the comforts and happiness of man. How many unspeakable advantages result from it! By this, if true believers, your sins are all pardoned. By this you have free access to God in prayer, for the constant supply of all your necessities†. God has already done much for you in past life. Has he not delivered you from many enemies and dangers? Has he not supported you in various trying circumstances? Has he not supplied your necessities from year to year, and often appeared in your favour, beyond your expectations? Now He is unchangeable; the same for ever and ever. He is as able to support, relieve, and deliver you, in present and future necessities and trials, as he was in those that are past. Think of this ye children of the most High, and *be of good comfort*.

Consider what the Lord has wrought *in* you. He has illuminated your minds; and shewn
C you

† Heb. iv. 16. Rom. viii. 32.

you the evil of sin, the danger of your natural condition, and your total inability to help or save yourselves. He has awakened your consciences to enquire how you may be pardoned and saved. He has discovered to you the love and power of Jesus, to "save you to the uttermost." He has inclined and enabled you to rely upon him, and to commit your fallen souls to him. He has given you a measure of "joy and peace in believing." He has given you many encouragements, and many sacred cordials in times of trial and adversity. He has turned your hearts from sin to holiness. Probably some of you were formerly "lovers of pleasures, more than lovers of God." But now you take a sacred delight in universal holiness. You can address the searcher of all hearts, in the language of his ancient Saint, "I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right. I hate every false way." "I hate and abhor lying; but thy law do I love†." This blessed change, which God by his spirit, has wrought in you, is a prelude to that glory to which he will soon advance you; and in the prospect of that glory, you have abundant reason to *be of good comfort*. For
"being

† Psal. cxix. 127, 128, 163.

“ being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life†.”

Consider, therefore, further, what your gracious God and Father has in reserve for you. He will not only give grace, but glory§. He gives you the former here, that he may give you the latter hereafter. To those who are converted, and under the influence of divine grace, live to the glory of God, in the service of Jesus Christ, eternal felicity is infallibly certain, whatever enemies oppose it, whatever difficulties lie in the way to it. Your blessed Lord and Saviour has most positively declared, “ Where I am, there shall also my servant be. If any man serve me, him will my Father honour||;” and his promise is firm as the everlasting mountains. “ Heaven and earth shall pass away ; but his word shall not pass away ” None who dare venture their all with him, shall ever be “ ashamed, or confounded, world without end.” Think of this, my brethren, and *be of good comfort.*

Consider what your heavenly Father has done for *others*. Frequently contemplate the regard he has had for his people, in all ages. This is recorded in the scriptures; and “ what-

C 2

forever

† Rom. vi. 22. § Psal. lxxxiv. 11. || John xii. 26.

soever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope||." Let these sacred pages be regarded as the "man of your counsel." Make them your meditation all the day; that your patience, hope, and comfort, may be continually supported, and continually increasing. No afflictions have overtaken you, or can overtake you, but such as are common to men. These, or similar ones, have been endured by the saints in all ages. Nor is the Lord's hand shortened, or his power diminished. He can and will save now, as he has saved in former times, all who trust in him. "Trust, therefore in the Lord at all times; for in the Lord Jehovah, is everlasting strength†." Thus will the experiences of former saints encourage and animate you to *be of good comfort*, in every part of your journey through this dreary Wilderness.

Associate with cheerful Christians. The power of sympathy is wonderful. We often imbibe the spirit of those with whom we are most familiar. On this account Solomon advises to avoid the company of angry men‡. "Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul."

|| Rom. xv. 4. † Isai. xxvi. 4. ‡ Prov. xxii. 24, 25.

soul." Thus persons who associate with those of a fretful impatient temper, too readily sink into gloom, impatience, and fretfulness themselves. On the contrary, those who are truly cheerful and comfortable, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, who live upon the promises, and enjoy a thankful happy frame of mind, diffuse happiness around them, and promote the cheerfulness and comfort of those with whom they are particularly conversant. The truth of this has been demonstrated in various instances; and in one respect or another, we daily experience the proof of it. I exhort you, therefore, if you would *be of good comfort*, to associate, as much as circumstances will permit, with comfortable and cheerful Christians.

In the last place, be much in prayer, to the "God of all comfort." Let the supplications of the great Apostle for the Ephesians be often presented at the throne of grace, in your own behalf, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."

By these various means, which, under the divine blessing, will assuredly prove, in a mea-

sure, successful, I exhort and encourage you, at the request of your late worthy Pastor, and in the language of the inspired Apostle, endeavour to *be of good comfort*. We pass on,

3. To the next part of this Apostolic exhortation. *Be of one mind*. By the term *mind*, is sometimes meant the understanding and judgment; sometimes the intention and design. Thus we understand it both in Scripture, and in common discourse. In the first of these senses, it is not easy, perhaps, all things considered, not possible, for the members of all churches, nor of any one church, to *be of one mind*; or to form exactly the same judgment of every subject. It certainly conduces greatly to the happiness of any Christian Society, when the members of it see things in the same light. But the education, the prejudices, the connections, the situations, the capacities of men are so various, that such uniformity of sentiment is scarcely to be expected in the present life. Besides, the understandings of men are not the subjects of volition; and therefore cannot be commanded either to believe or disbelieve, further than evidence appears. It is the duty of all men to *search the Scriptures* for themselves; and it is of much greater importance that my understanding and judgment be kept in subjection to the word of God, and regulated by it, than that I think as my brethren do.

We

We may add further, that if men were commanded to think in all things exactly alike, a question would naturally arise, "whose judgment is to be the standard for the rest?" This might lead into endless contentions; because every man would be found to have the same right to claim that honour. Any other person has as much right to think for me, and to require that my sentiments conform to his, as I have to think for him, and to require him to think as I do. But the claim of such right, in any Christian, is an opposition to Jesus Christ, who forbids any of his disciples, to "be called master, or to call any man father upon the earth;" who claims all authority to dictate, or command in divine matters, to himself; and has left this one incontrovertible maxim to all his followers. "One is your master, even Christ†."

If however, all Christians would sincerely read and study the scriptures for themselves, as the one directory in all parts of faith and practice, they would not only be happy in collecting the best knowledge, but, we have great reason to believe, they would be more united in judgment than they frequently are. I therefore earnestly recommend to you my brethren, our Saviour's direction, "Search the Scriptures||,"

† Mat. xxiii. 6—12.

tures||," not merely that your views of divine things may accord with each other ; but, which is of infinitely greater importance, that you may all understand the mind of God, and practise it.

So many arguments might be adduced to prove that the Apostle cannot be supposed to exhort the Corinthians to understand every subject in the same manner, that I think we are necessitated to explain the term *mind* here, in the second sense mentioned above ; and to suppose that Paul is recommending *unity of design* or intention. We therefore suppose him to say to the Corinthians, " Take care that you all keep in view that *one thing*, which it is the great design of christianity to promote, the *glory of God* ;" by a holy, zealous attention to his will, and obedience to his commands. However you may differ in more circumstantial, and less important matters, maintain an *union of heart* in this, and you cannot, on the whole, be materially wrong." This sense the original will very well bear†. This is the duty and the great concern of every true believer, and of every

|| John v. 39.

† *τὸ αὐτὸ πρὸς ἑαί*. Attend to the same thing. See Dr. Doddridge in Loc. and Leigh and Parkhurst on the word *εἰς ἑαί*. And Dr. Doddridge's excellent Sermon on Candour and Unanimity.

every christian society ; and every one ; by divine assistance, can attend to it.

In this sense, the same greek word seems to be used in the following passages. “ They that are after the flesh, do *mind*, or relish, desire, and pursue, the things of the flesh. *Mind not* high things. Do not aim at them, nor pursue them, as valuable objects.” False and carnal professors are said to “ *mind* earthly things.” They love, aim at, and pursue, them. Christians, in opposition to these, are exhorted to *set their affections* on things above. Peter is reproved by our Saviour, in this strong language, “ *Thou savourest not* the things that be of God, but those that be of men†.” In all these passages the same greek word is used, and evidently in the same sense, or nearly the same, with that which we have given of the passage now before us.

Let it, therefore, be your constant endeavour, brethren, to be united in the pursuit of *one object*. “ Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God||.” Keep this continually in view. You are under every obligation of duty, of gratitude, and of interest, to make this your chief concern. God is your Creator. He has given you all your capacities

† Rom. viii. 5.—xii. 16. Phil. iii. 19. Col. iii. 2.
Mat. xvi. 23. || 1 Cor. x. 31.

pacities of soul and body. He is your preserver, and the benefactor of all the good you enjoy. He has given his dear Son to die for your sins, to deliver you from the wrath to come, and to make you eternally happy with himself. Can any thing be more reasonable than that gratitude for such immense favours should awaken every power of our souls to activity and diligence in his service, and the promotion of his glory ?

Your interest also is concerned in it. “ In keeping the commandments of God, there is great reward†.” “ Great peace have they who love his law, and nothing shall offend them||.” Not only do your peace and comfort here, greatly depend upon your being devoted to God ; but according to the riches of his grace, he will hereafter reward you in his glorious kingdom in proportion to the degree in which you have loved him, and served him on earth. “ He will reward every man according to his works§.”

It is not only necessary that you labour to the utmost of your power, to promote the glory of God ; but that you be *united* in this great concern. Be of *one mind* in it. You are all under the most indispensable obligations. You will

† Psal. xix. 11. || Psal. cxix. 165. § Rom. ii. 6. Mat. xvi. 27. Gal. vi. 7, 9.

will all find the advantage of it, both in time and eternity. By union of heart, and mutual assistance, you strengthen the hands of one another. You animate and encourage each other; and the work of God goes forward with vigour and success, when his people are united in it.

Let me exhort you to unite in studying the word of God, which contains the will of your heavenly Father. He has graciously caused it to be written for your instruction. He has put his own directions in your hands. Ignorance of any branch of duty is, therefore, highly criminal. O search the scriptures. "Prove all things," by the contents of this invaluable book; "and hold fast that which is good†." Reduce all you read to practice; and in divine strength, exert all your power to be exemplary and eminent in every branch of holiness. "Be not slothful, brethren, but followers of those who, through faith and patience inherit the promises||."

Frequently "take sweet counsel together," respecting the great object which you all have in view; the glory of God, and the means of promoting it. "Speak often one to another. Exhort one another," and labour to "provoke one another to love, and to good works‡." This

† 1 Theff. v. 21. || Heb. vi. 12. ‡ Mal. iii. 16.
Heb. x. 24.

This will tend both to animate, and to unite you. The mutual endearments which arise from the mutual admonitions and exhortations of those whose minds are upright, can be experienced by those only who give and receive them.

While you are unitedly *intending this one thing*, you may expect to meet with difficulty, and even opposition. You live in a world, in which there are combinations for sin and Satan, as well as for God and holiness. Your endeavours will be resisted by the ungodly. You will be despised, perhaps hated, by carnal, trifling professors. The corruptions of fallen nature will oppose you. Probably you may hazard, possibly forfeit, some secular advantages. You must therefore resolve, by grace, to “deny yourselves, and take up your cross daily.” Look with a holy indifference on the riches, the honours, the pleasures, and the friendship, of this present world, as poor fading things. Neither these, nor the sufferings you may endure in despising them, are “worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in you†,” at the coming of Jesus Christ. Imitate the noble example of Moses who “esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt|| ;” and like him, have “re-
spect

† Rom. xiv. 18. || Heb. xi. 26.

spect to the recompence of reward."

To engage, and to *unite* your whole souls in this glorious pursuit, remember that God is invariable in his methods of dealing with men. He always did, and ever will, "honour those who honour him:" But those who "despise him, shall always be lightly esteemed†" by him: and if he vouchsafe to smile upon you, the frowns of your most potent, and most malicious adversaries are not worthy of much regard. Let me entreat your patient and candid attention,

4. To the Fourth and last branch of the exhortation here given by the Apostle, and recommended to your attention by your late affectionate Pastor. Take care that you *live in Peace*.

The promotion of peace among men, is a grand object, and happy effect of the gospel, so far as it operates on our minds. The cultivation of a peaceable temper is, therefore, one important branch of practical christianity. The people of God, pronounced blessed by our divine Saviour, are declared to be *peace-makers*. These shall be *called*, his children, and acknowledged for such, at the great day†. Their heavenly Father is styled, in our text, and elsewhere, "the God of Peace." The Lord Jesus,

D

our

† 1 Sam. ii. 30. † Mat. v. 7.

our Saviour, and great example is the "Prince of Peace." The gospel itself is the "gospel of peace." All professors of christianity, therefore, are under the strongest obligations, as far as possible, to live peaceably with all men;" but especially, to "be at peace among themselves†."

Many things tend to diminish or obstruct the peace of the church. Satan is an indefatigable enemy against it. He takes an infernal pleasure in dividing, in order that he may weaken and destroy. False and carnal professors of christianity are frequently employed in exciting contentions; and there are too many of this character in most churches. These being destitute of the power and spirit of true religion, and un sanctified in their hearts, are living in the indulgence of wrath, pride, covetousness, and other abominable tempers and passions, diametrically opposite to the gospel; and are often the occasions of disturbance among those with whom they are connected. With respect to persons of such a character, I recommend to you, brethren, the wholesome direction of the great Apostle. "Mark them who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and *avoid* them; for they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ,

† Isai. ix. 6. Ephes. vi. 15. Rom. xii. 18. 1 Thes. v. 18.

Christ, but their own belly ; and by good words and fair speeches, deceive the hearts of the simple†.”

Even among real Christians, there are many who are weak and inadvertent, who too frequently speak and act in an imprudent manner. These often, without design, occasion distress to the prudent and judicious, and reproaches from the inconsiderate and ungodly, who eagerly embrace opportunities to derame, and vilify the ways and people of God.

In the best christians there are too many defects. Among these, different interests and various attachments, are often more prevalent than they ought to be, misunderstandings take place, and the contending parties are not easily reconciled. Satan takes the advantage, prejudices arise from circumstances in which there was nothing really criminal. Looks, gestures, expressions, are all observed ; and construed in an unfavourable light. These prejudices are discovered to others. By ruminating and conversing they collect strength, where no harm was intended ; and suspicions are admitted, and indulged. Every man has his particular friends and confidants. Different conceptions are formed of the same action. Parties arise. The parties grow warm on one side ; and this

D 2

warmth

† Rom. xvi. 17, 18.

warmth occasions heat on the other. The disagreeable effects are sometimes of long continuance. On the sight of these things, we naturally exclaim, with the Apostle James||, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth" If the whole epistle of this Apostle, were carefully read, and reduced to practice by professors of Christianity, many such moral disasters would be happily prevented, or soon removed. There are likewise directions given by other Apostles, which, if reduced to practice, would greatly conduce to the peace of gospel churches. I recommend the following, out of many, to your serious attention. "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour, for his good, to edification.—Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus‡."

Above all the evils which disturb the peace of churches, and occasion disorders in them, perhaps none is equally fatal, with the vile and diabolical practices of evil surmising, tale-bearing

|| James i. i. 5. ‡ Rom. xv. 1, 2. Phil. ii. 3, 4, 5.

ing, whispering, and backbiting. How much the blessed God abhors these practices, may be judged by the many instances in which he has in the strongest language, forbidden and condemned them, both in the old and new Testament. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people. A tale-bearer revealeth secrets; but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter. The words of a tale-bearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly. He that goeth about as a tale-bearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flattereth with his lips.—Where there is no tale-bearer, the strife ceaseth*." How happy would it be for churches, and for individuals, if these passages were conscientiously regarded.

Whispering, backbiting, evil-speaking, and evil surmising, are ranked among the most enormous crimes, and condemned with the utmost severity, in that book, by which we must all be judged, how much soever we now regard, or disregard it. "A froward man soweth strife, and a whisperer separateth chief friends§." In this infallible book, whisperers and backbiters are placed in one of that black catalogues of sinners which the *heathens* themselves allow to contain the characters of those

D 3

who

* Lev. xix. 16. Prov. xi. 13. xviii. 8. xx. 16.
xxvi. 20, 22.

§ Prov. xvi. 28.

who are *worthy of death*. Sinners, who are filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; *whisperers, backbiters*, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful†." These characters are so detestable, and so pernicious to Society, that Paul was afraid lest he should find some of them in the Corinthian Church||, lest he should find among them "debates, envyings, wrath, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults." Among the characters of a citizen of Zion, one is, that "he backbiteth not with his tongue—nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour." Nor is any crime more expressly forbidden than that of evil-speaking*. Timothy is directed to withdraw himself from those who practise, or who occasion, railings and evil surmisings, as infectious and dangerous persons.

The injury that has been done to churches and individuals, and the advantages which have been given to the adversaries of Christ and his religion, by these abominations is unutterable. I intreat you, my brethren, to beware of these,
and

† Rom. i. 29—31. || 2 Cor. xii. 20. * Psalm xv. 3.
§ Ephes. iv. 31. James iv. 11. ‡ 1 T.m. iv. 4, 5.

and all similar practices, if you wish to promote union of heart, and to "be at peace among yourselves*."

It is much to be lamented that some weak persons have taken up the idea that we do not speak evil of others, nor are guilty of the sin of backbiting, unless we say that which is *not* true of our fellow-creatures. It is evident the truth and falsehood of what we speak, do not determine whether we are guilty of this sin or not. If I misrepresent the character or conduct of others, and know it to be a misrepresentation, this is the sin of *slandering*; but if I unnecessarily censure or reproach those who are absent, though I speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, it is the sin of *backbiting*. The iniquity, of this practice, would easily be discovered, by considering the injury which I may do to my absent fellow-creature, by relating his real faults; and how unrighteous it is to injure any one, even the worst being that exists. Could persons be persuaded to make the case of an absent person their own, this evil would appear in a stronger light; for I feel that I could not wish another, without necessity, to expose even my real mistakes or misconduct. Now the rule which our Saviour has given us, and which is so equitable, that it re-
commends

* 1 Theff. iv. 13.

commends itself to every conscience, is to do to others, whether present or absent, as I would with them to do to me||. Can any one, then, pretend that he acts the part of a christian, while he unnecessarily speaks to the disadvantage of an absent person?

Consider, therefore, the iniquity of such a practice, and how injurious it is to the Peace of Society; and “speak not evil one of another, brethren†.” The passage before us implies, and the nature of things evinces, that *means* are to be used by every member of any society whatever, in order to preserve and promote the Peace of it. These means ought to be used with perseverance and diligence:—“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men*.”

It is fundamental to every thing which can be done in this view, that you all earnestly labour after a peaceable disposition. Where a desire to *please* and to *oblige*, universally prevails, rules are easily and carefully observed. It is your duty, and your interest to pray that this disposition may prevail in you all. It will do more to promote the peace of the Church than many arguments. Though a person of a peaceful and obliging disposition may not possess

|| Mat. vii. 12. Luke vi. 31. † Jam. iv. 11.

* Rom. xii. 18.

self the art of pleasing, he will, however, not frequently displease†.

Be careful, if possible, never to say, or do, any thing that is offensive. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God||." Hasty expressions, sly looks, distant and unkind treatment, though nothing offensive be intended, may lay a foundation for prejudices, not soon removed; and these prejudices may break forth into quarrels and contentions, the mischievous effects of which may be of long continuance. Few who have been much acquainted with mankind, can have failed to make these observations. They shew the propriety and importance of Solomon's advice, which I beg leave, brethren, to recommend to your attention; as well as the fact upon which it is grounded. "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water; therefore leave off contention before it be meddled with*."

Avoid, particularly, the enormous crimes mentioned above, *tale-bearing, whispering, back-biting*, and *evil surmising*; which so effectually destroy the peace and prosperity of all churches in

† "When the design of pleasing is visible, an absurdity in the way toward it is easily forgiven."

SPECTATOR, No. 21.

|| 1 Cor. x. 32. * Prov. xvii. 14.

in which they prevail. "Study to be quiet, and to do your own business.*" Remember, "It is an honour for a man to cease from strife; but every *fool* will be meddling†." Never unnecessarily concern yourselves with the characters or conduct of others, unless you can do it to their advantage. Our Saviour's golden Rule abovementioned, if duly attended to§, would prevent much sin, and many inconveniencies. Every thinking man sees, and every honest man acknowledges, the propriety of it. None would wish others to be perpetually tattling about themselves and exposing their defects, when they have not the opportunity of speaking in their own vindication. Let no one then among you be guilty of such behaviour towards others. The peace of no society can be long maintained, where such a vile practice is allowed,

Be not fond of making remarks on the improprieties which you observe, or imagine you observe, in the behaviour of other men, whether friends or strangers. It is, indeed, a proof of a contracted or sour mind, to be offended when such observations are made: But there are so many persons of this class, that such observations ought to be made with great caution. Many little inadvertencies of conduct,

and

* 1 Thess. iv. 11. † Prov. xx. 3. § Mat. vii. 12.

and expressions dropped without consideration, having no immoral tendency, are better passed over than noticed. Taking notice of them has often excited disagreeable sensations, and produced animosities among brethren.

Beware of assuming authority and unbecoming importance among your friends. Remember that every one has a *self*: Every one can feel. Such assuming airs grieve your brethren, and offend Christ; who, as we have seen above, allows no superiority of this kind, to any of his disciples. Nor can these assumptions among men of understanding, answer the purpose intended. If human authority in the church of Christ were of that value and importance, which it is in this case supposed to be, assumed airs are not the means of obtaining it. Humility, kindness, and condescension, are the means of procuring real esteem and influence. In this, as in other circumstances, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" and "before honour is humility." Pride, arrogance, and assumed self-importance, are generally treated, by men of understanding, with the contempt they deserve. The consequence is frequently animosity and contention.

Beware of hastily *taking* offence, as well as of *giving* it. We may imagine that others are offended with us, when they are not; and that
they

they design to offend us, when no such design exists. A person may make observations, not the most judicious, not properly timed, without designing to be offensive. Such observations may be ambiguous, and admit of a two-fold construction. A suspicious temper will put that construction upon them which is the most unfavourable. This suspicion rancours in the heart, is laid open to others; and facts are taken for granted which never existed. One evil leads to another. The Church is disturbed. Reports are circulated; and contention is the consequence. On both sides, brethren, these surmises, and this behaviour, ought to be avoided.

Should any of you apprehend that you are slighted or unjustly treated by another, be not forward to resent it. You may have mistaken the intention of the person with whom you are concerned. But supposing his intention unkind, it is more honourable to overlook and to forgive the offence, than to resent it with indignation: "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger; and it is his glory to pass over a transgression||" Forget not the Christian rule; "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted; forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you‡."

Beware

Beware of *terangling*, in all its forms. If any offence have been given, or any thing done to you by others, which requires animadversion, our Saviour has given you a plain rule, by which to effect a reconciliation. This always succeeds; and no other method can be justified. Conscientiously attend to it: "If thy brother trespass against thee," do not report it to other people; but "go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more; that in the mouth of two or three witnesses, every word may be established. And if he neglect to hear them," then, and not till then, "tell it to the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican*."

Finally, be, all of you, earnest and constant in prayer, for the peace of the church. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." Pray that God would give you all peaceable dispositions: that he would enable you to imitate Jesus, your great example, who was "meek and lowly in heart." Pray that you may be deeply sensible of the value of peace, and the wickedness of every thing opposite to it. Pray that you all

E

may

may have power over your own spirits, your passions and tempers ; that you may not be, at any time, ensnared and overcome, before you are aware. The good Lord hear you, and help you, and “grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his spirit, in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith ; and that you may be rooted and grounded in love*, to him and to one another, for the glory of his adorable name, through our ever-blessed Redeemer ! Thus will you be a happy and flourishing people. Your late good Pastor’s best wishes for your welfare will be accomplished, and that unspeakable blessing will be your portion which I am very briefly to illustrate, as,

III. The *Motive*, by which this Apostolic exhortation is enforced. If you are thus perfect, of good comfort, of one mind, and live in peace, “the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

You need not be informed, my brethren, that God is every where present, He is “not far from every one of us§.” His immensity fills all space. There is no place in heaven, earth, or hell, where his providence and power are not exerted||. “All things are full of God†, was a heathen maxim ; and it is both illustrated

* Ephes. iii. 16, 17. § Acts xvii. 27.

† Psalm cxxxix. 7—13. ‡ Jovis omnia plena, Virgil, Eccl. iii. 60.

illustrated and confirmed by the doctrine of the infallible Scriptures.

But God is present with his people, in a spiritual manner, as “the God of all grace,” to quicken, strengthen and comfort their minds, to encrease their purity and their consolation. Thus by his spiritual presence, “those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing†.” They “grow up into Christ” their living head in all things*. They “are filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God||.” Happy indeed “are the people that are in such a case;” who, by the divine presence, and the influences of his spirit, are growing in purity and comfort, to the praise of his great name.

When God is thus with any people, he makes his ordinances beneficial to them. In waiting upon him, “they renew their strength; they mount up with wings as eagles, they run” the sacred race *without weariness*; and walk in the paths of truth and holiness, *without fainting*.

This gracious promise, connected with the preceding exhortation, calls your attention to some instructive lessons, which I intreat you frequently to contemplate.

E 2

1. God

† Psalm xc. i. 13, 14. * Ephes. iv. 15. || Phil. i. 11.

1. God is "the God of Love and Peace." He is the Author of both these excellencies. He commands his Saints to practise both. He communicates both love and peace to real believers by his spirit;—and by the same spirit enables them to exemplify his commands in their behaviour. He approves them in every church, and every individual, in whom they are found; and most positively forbids and condemns whatever is opposite to them. These facts are manifest from what has been already observed. Hence it appears that those who do not cultivate and practise love and peace, are opposite to the blessed God in their tempers, and rebellious against him in their lives. Such must be "renewed in the spirit of their minds," before they can have communion with God upon earth, or the least well grounded hope of being happy with him in the next world. On the other hand, those who cultivate christian love and peace, have one good evidence of their interest in the "father of mercies," and of their title to his glorious kingdom†.

2. By the gracious and spiritual presence of God, churches and individuals are made truly happy. Hence the Apostle here mentions it, by way of promise, as a mighty inducement to attend to the duties he has recommended. A
promise

† See 1 John, iii. 14. iv. 7, 8. Mat. v. 9.

promise so "great and precious" has sweetness and force enough in it, to excite the most grateful attention, and to awaken all the exertion of which the human mind is capable, in the practice of the duties thus enforced.

3. Means are to be used by churches and individuals, in order to our enjoyment of the gracious presence of God; without the use of which means, that inestimable favour is not to be expected. The means are laid before you, in the exhortation already illustrated: and the promise is so connected with the exhortation as to shew that when the duties recommended are not practised, the promise by which they are enforced will not be performed, nor the blessings contained in it enjoyed. Recollect then, brethren, what you have read; and be assured that if you be not thus "perfect, of good comfort, of one mind, and careful to live in peace," you have no reason to hope that "the God of love and peace will be with you." We can add, however, with much pleasure, and in the contemplation of it, you may take great encouragement, that,

4. The Promise contained in the text, is inseparably connected with the duties recommended in it. If you attend to these duties, "the God of Love and Peace *shall* be with you." No church, therefore, can possibly be

destitute of this unspeakable blessing, in the practice of the duties contained in the exhortation. In this, and in every other case, the means and the end always go hand in hand. The Faithfulness, Wisdom, and Goodness of God will always be demonstrated in the experience of those churches that are eminently attentive to Truth, Peace, and Purity.

We have here an opportunity of making a most important general remark. May it be deeply engraven on my own heart, on your's, on the hearts of all who may read this discourse ! As no individuals can be finally miserable, but those who persist in sin, neither can any religious Society be forsaken of God, in the use of those means with which he has connected the promise of his presence. The *outward* enemies of a church cannot destroy it, or prevent the advancement of its prosperity and comfort. Every age has witnessed that the churches of Christ have generally flourished most, when their outward enemies have been most numerous, and most inveterate. "The blood of the saints is the seed of the church," is an old maxim, the truth of which has been confirmed from age to age. On the contrary, when carnality, indolence, conformity to this world, wrangling and contention ; when these or similar evils generally prevail, the effect is, such churches

churches begin to dwindle, and to die away ; at least their spiritual consolations are evidently diminished. It is when churches walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost," that they are generally "multiplied*," as well as edified. I beg leave, brethren, to conclude this subject with the words of Paul to the Philippians, in which a similar exhortation is enforced by a similar promise ; and wish you to regard them as coming from your dear departed pastor ; as I well know that they are expressive of those sentiments under the influence of which he laboured among you : "Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do : and the God of Peace shall be with you†."

A few general observations, which this part of Scripture suggests, which every immortal creature ought always to remember, and which I beseech you frequently to review, shall close the whole of this discourse.

1. How evident is the Jealousy and Purity of the great God ! He will not bless with his presence, those persons or churches who are living in the voluntary indulgence of any sin. "Holiness becomes his house for ever. He will be sanctified in them that come nigh him ;

* Acts. ix. 31. † Phil. iv. 9.

him ; and before his people, he will be glorified*." He is of " purer eyes than to behold iniquity." Take care, brethren, how you trifle with a God of infinite purity. If indolence, wrath, pride, conformity to a vain world, or any other sins be indulged among you, the Holy Spirit will be grieved. The gracious presence of God will depart from you. The Lord will treat you as he has treated other churches which have sunk into carnality of mind. He will, probably, in the end, " remove your candlestick out of its place, except you repent."

I request, that you would frequently read the Epistles written to the seven churches in Asia||. Observe what Jesus approved and disapproved in them ; and remember that He is " the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." He still approves the same excellencies, and disapproves the same iniquities ; and will continue to do so to the end of time. You will not consider this as the language of suspicion, or reproof ; but of friendly caution. I rejoice in your present prosperous condition. I and many others remember the time when the church I am now addressing, was very low indeed. Through the blessing of God on the labours of your late Pastor, it has been recovered from that dismal situation

* Lev. x. 3.

|| Rev. ii. iii.

situation, to a state of respectability. I rejoice in your present prospect of enjoying the labours of another worthy minister of Jesus Christ†, who will “feed you with knowledge and understanding;” and, by the same grace, build you up, “an habitation of God, through the Spirit.”

2. You see, from the passage we have endeavoured to illustrate, what that great blessing is which all churches ought to seek, in order to their prosperity and comfort, the *presence of God*. Riches, honours, the esteem of men, can never make you truly happy. But to enjoy the smiles of our heavenly Father, and the quickening influences of his spirit, is a blessing, and an honour that we can never value sufficiently. These revive our souls, support our minds, and purify our hearts. By these, ministers are vigorous, and labour with success; and the people under their care “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” Let this be your great concern. Pray for it daily. Use the proper means; and “God, even our own God, will assuredly give you his blessing.”

3. You will here perceive in what light we ought to view such professors as observe not the duties here recommended. They encourage in them-

† MR. WILLIAM TAYLOR.

themselves, and so far as they can influence others, they propagate in their fellow members, a temper and conduct directly opposite to the mind of God. Consequently they are enemies to the prosperity of genuine christianity. Alarming as the consideration is, we need not hesitate to affirm, that they are "the enemies of the cross of Christ||." In proportion to the degree in which this carnality prevails among any people, the Spirit is grieved, and the presence of that God, without whom they can do nothing, is excluded from them.

Happy, indeed, are those Christian Societies which are free from such members! Happy they, who, by a wholesome discipline, get rid of them as soon as possible; and who unitedly keep alive to God, in the practice of these important duties! Be persuaded, brethren, frequently to compare yourselves with the contents of this passage; and "give no place, no not for an hour," if possible, to what is opposite to it. O be persuaded to "look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble you, and thereby many be defiled‡."

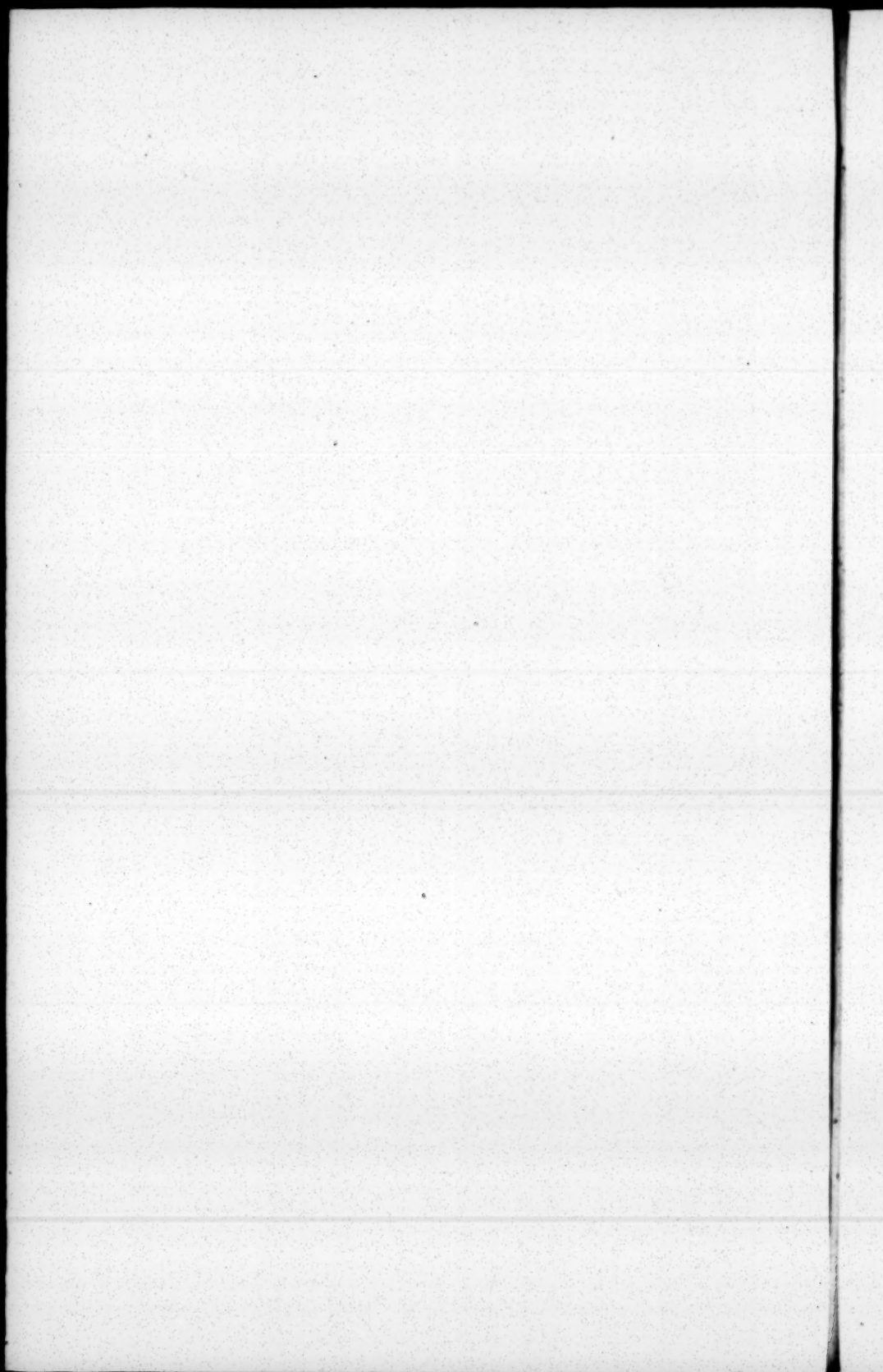
4. Observe, in the last place, who are the most useful ministers; and the most useful and honourable members of christian Societies. Not those who have the clearest understandings,

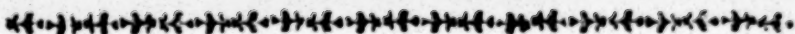
|| Phil. iii. 18, ‡ Heb. xii. 15.

ings, or the most accurate conception of the theory of religion, while they neglect peace and purity : but the spiritually-minded, the diligent, the peaceful, the humble, the affectionate followers of Jesus Christ : Those who " learn of Him ;" who " walk as He walked ;" who possess and cultivate the same spirit of peace, purity, and love, of which He was the glorious example. I rejoice in believing that my good brother, now settling among you, will prove such a minister ; and that you, in imitation of him, so far as he imitates our blessed Redeemer, will be such a people. If so, I am sure " the God of love and peace will be with you." Under the cheering influence of His Spirit, you will " flourish like the palm-tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. You will be fruitful, even in old age ; you will be fat and flourishing." Thus you will experimentally discover " that the Lord is upright." He will be " your rock ;" and you will be living witnesses " that there is no unrighteousness in him*." Other ministers and churches will hear of your prosperity ; and I trust " your zeal will provoke very many." You will be useful, happy, and ornamental to christianity, while you live ; and in due time, after your late affectionate pastor, you will arrive at that blissful world, where you shall eternally enjoy all that an immortal soul can reasonably desire.

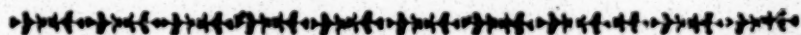
Amen ! so be it.

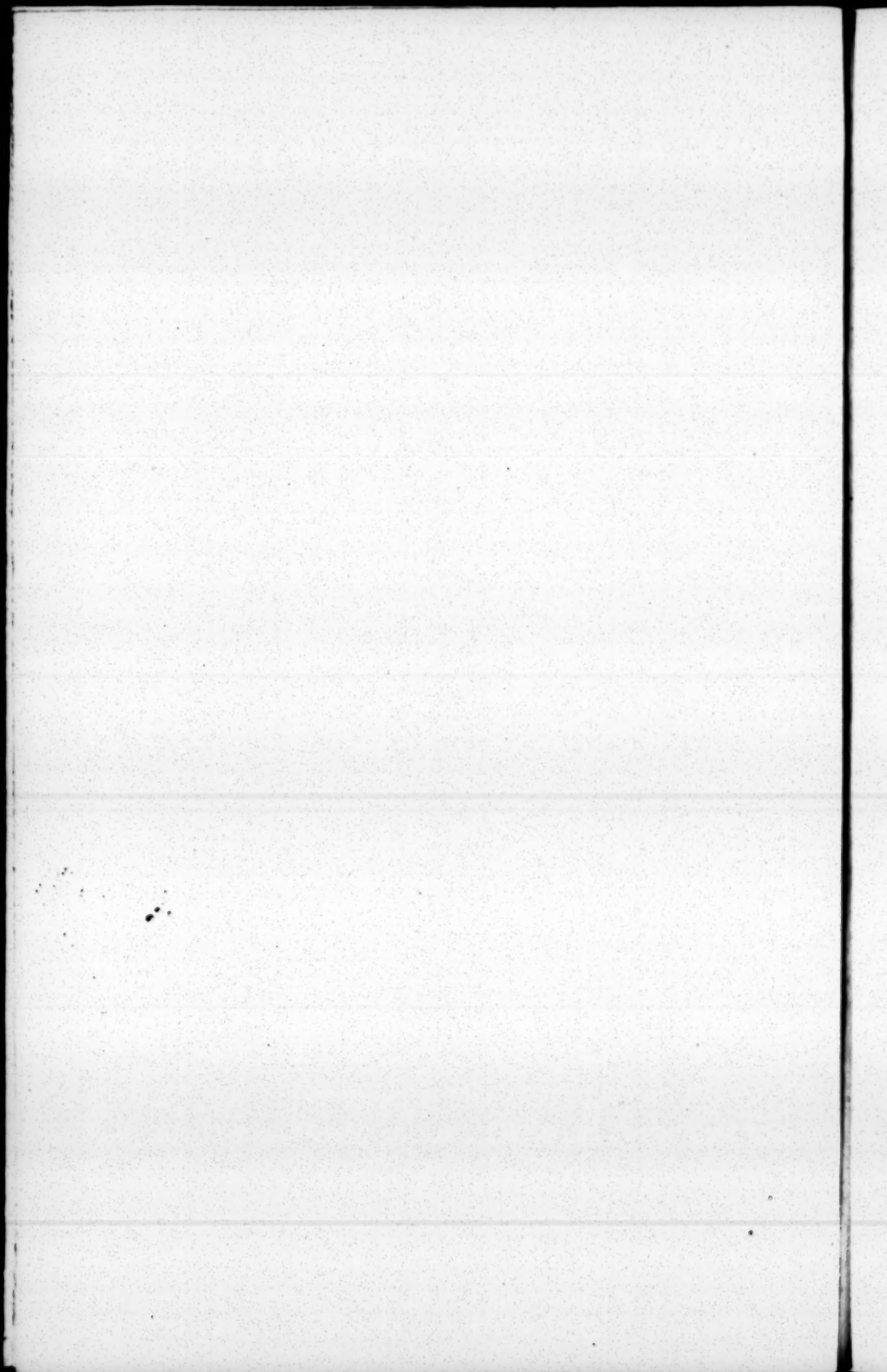
* Psalm xcii. 12. 15.





MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE AND CHARACTER
OF THE LATE
Rev. WILLIAM THOMPSON.





MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE
OF THE
Late Rev. WILLIAM THOMPSON,

S E C T. I.

*A General View of his Life and Ministry till his
Ordination.*

MR. THOMPSON was born at WEST-BUTTERWICK, in the Isle of *Axholme*, in the County of *Lincoln*, on the sixteenth day of November, 1735. O. S. His parents were of that denomination of Protestant Dissenters, known by the name of General Baptists, and of considerable reputation for piety in their neighbourhood. They put him to School at an early age; and he soon gave proofs of a ready capacity. But it does not appear that he had any great advantages at that time, nor that he made any considerable improvements in learning, further than writing and reading English. As he advanced in years, he was much addicted to mirth and carnal pleasures. This grieved his aged and pious father. To have only one Son, and he likely to turn out a vain and wicked youth, was very distressing. Children owe much to parents, especially to pious parents, and frequently consider not, as they ought, what distress they cause to them, and what

F

guilt

guilt they contract, in the sight of God, when they disobey the commands, and refuse the wholesome advice of those who were the instruments of their existence.

As Mr. THOMPSON's father was a pious man, he compelled him to attend divine worship with himself, though as he confessed, it was often against his inclination. But, says he, "I have thought since that this was very serviceable to me, as it brought me under convictions, when I attended preaching, and afterwards, when committing sin, I had sharp checks of conscience, so that I could not sin with pleasure; but often experienced the truth of that text, *there is no peace to the wicked*. The stings of conscience none but myself can conceive. Well may it be said concerning the wicked, *the way of peace they have not known*. By reason of those convictions I made many resolutions to forsake sin, and to become sober and religious; for I often concluded my state bad, and thought myself in great danger. But the Devil, and my own carnal heart would have persuaded me that I was better than some others, and that when I was older I might reform, and turn to God, and then all would be well. But alas! who could assure me that I should live another day? Thus I went on for some time and made many resolutions; but broke most of them. Under one particular Sermon,
from

from these words, *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved*, I was very much awakened, brought to tears, and resolved to forsake the ways of sin. Alas! thought I, should it be so with me, how dreadful must my condition be! should I squander away my precious time, until the *harvest* and *summer* of grace and mercy are ended, what must become of my poor soul? I must be miserable for ever!"

I have given the reader this account of Mr. THOMPSON'S convictions, in his own language, should it be read by any who are yet living in sin, may they consider how applicable it is to themselves, and may those who are under similar convictions, and those who have, through grace, believed, be enabled to make some profitable use of them! May Ministers of the gospel, particularly, be excited to endeavour to alarm poor thoughtless creatures, by apprizing them of their dreadful danger, in order that the great end of our ministry may, through the divine blessing, be more abundantly answered, which is "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ." The remarks which might be made upon the account which Mr. THOMPSON has here given of himself, are various and important;

but the nature and limits of this design forbid us to enlarge upon them.

It does not appear, however, that Mr. THOMPSON's natural aversion to Christ and holiness was yet effectually conquered, or that he was delivered now from the reigning power of sin. For he adds, that "by reason of Satan's temptations, and the vain inclinations of his corrupt nature, he was soon diverted from this close and serious way of thinking, soon fell in with his old companions, and his old vain practices."—But "in process of time, (as he expresses it) he was, by the grace of God, so awakened, that he saw nothing but ruin and eternal destruction before him. He was warned to flee from the wrath to come; and directed to lay hold on the hope set before him in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is an all-sufficient, suitable, and willing Saviour of all them that flee to him and believe in him."

His mind being brought to some degree of stability and consolation, through faith in the Lord Jesus, he offered himself to the Church, and was baptized in May, 1755, in the twentieth year of his age. For some time after this, he observes, "I was careful of my conduct, lest I should dishonour God, and give cause of reproach to the enemies of religion." But after this he was again ensnared, by bad company and carnal amusements, to which he had before been so much addicted. This brought upon him

him remorse of conscience and self-condemnation. But he did not continue long in this snare of Satan, "The Spirit of God," to use his own expressions, "was still striving with him to bring him back again, into the right way of peace and salvation." About Michaelmas, the same year, he proposed to some members of the church, that they should have a meeting for prayer, reading, and spiritual conversation. To this they agreed. They kept these meetings once a week, by which, and other means, his strength was renewed, and his gifts visibly increased; so that in a few months, he was encouraged, among some select friends, to give his thoughts on a portion of Scripture. His friends wished him to proceed in these exercises, by which he was animated to close application; and "before the winter was over, many people attended to hear him." For, says he, "it was remarkable that one who but a little time before was a Ranter, should now become a Preacher. I may justly say with the apostle, by the grace of God I am what I am."

In these first Essays he appears to have been of considerable use to persons in that neighbourhood; and, which is generally a consequence of doing good to the souls of men, he met with considerable opposition and persecution from others. He continued these exercises at the village where he was born, once or twice a week; and at several other places, for about
two

two years till he had a call to Hull in Yorkshire. He accepted this call with much reluctance ; but met with unexpected encouragement ; and after he had preached there four or five Sabbaths, the people at Hull requested his continuance with them for some time longer. He went to reside with them on the 18th day of August 1758, in the twenty-third year of his age. It pleased God greatly to bleis his labours to the people at Hull, so that the number of hearers, which at his beginning to preach among them, was small, soon encreased to three or four hundred ; and before he had been there three years, twenty-three persons were baptized, and added to the church.

During the three years of his ministry at Hull, he was much afflicted in body ; but experienced great supports in his soul ; and appears to have been much improved in his knowledge of Christ, and the way of salvation by him. “ In this illness also, he observes, in 1760, the Lord was pleased to appear for my comfort and satisfaction of mind. I had such a sight and sense of the suitableness and sufficiency of Christ Jesus to save me with an everlasting salvation, that I was comfortable and enabled to rejoice.” On this occasion, he put down four lines, very simple indeed ; but expressive of the holy admiration and gratitude which then engaged

gaged his mind; and therefore, I venture to transcribe them.

- “ And did my Saviour bleed and die
- “ For such a sinful wretch as I?
- “ Exult, my soul, rejoice, and see,
- “ The Saviour bled and died for me.”

After Mr. THOMPSON's account of his recovery from his affliction, he makes some pious and wise observations on the great benefits which may be received from such visitations, which for the sake of brevity are here omitted. They abundantly discover the integrity of his heart, and his ardent desire by every means, to improve in the divine life.

In the ensuing summer, 1761, he married a valuable young woman, a member of the church to which he preached, who proved a very suitable companion, and a great blessing to him, for many years. Mentioning the circumstances of his marriage, he remarks in the true spirit of christianity, “ I determined to marry no person whatever, unless I had reason to believe she was truly godly. I would put religion in the front, and the world, or her portion, should bring up the rear. I esteemed virtue far above gold—I hope we were joined together in, and by the Lord. O what a satisfaction to a pious mind, to enter into the marriage state in the fear of God, having his
glory

glory in view ; and to be joined to one of his children."

It is scarcely necessary to inform the reader, but it is proper we all should be reminded, that no situation in life, nor any connections upon earth can ensure uninterrupted prosperity in this miserable world. Though Mr. Thompson was now situated as comfortably as could be reasonably wished, and had formed a connection which promised, and which actually produced, as much satisfaction as perhaps can be expected on earth ; yet he was, soon after this, exercised with various afflictions and distresses. Among these were the loss of a valuable sister, who, as he informs us, "died rejoicing, with hopes full of immortality and glory ;" and the loss of his mother, who, in walking from Butterwick to Epworth, was taken ill on the road, exposed to the inclemency of the night, and expired the next morning, soon after she was found. On which Mr. Thompson justly observes, "How sudden the stroke ! how necessary to be always ready ! Prepare, my soul, to meet thy God."

But his heaviest affliction at this time, seems to have been that which arose from the congregation to which he preached ; and which I think it best to give in his own words : Only premising, that as I am persuaded they were not written, so I am sure they are not here transcribed.

transcribed, with the least design to inflame contending parties, nor to reflect on any denomination of professing Christians, nor on any received system of doctrines whatsoever. A particular account of this affair is here related, as it will lay open a part of my friend's life not much known, and may furnish an answer to some enquiries which have been proposed respecting the occasion of his leaving Hull, and removing to Boston in Lincolnshire, where he spent the remaining part of his days with usefulness and honour.

“ This winter,” he observes (1762) we met with new troubles at Hull, from some of our members. For as part of them were for Particular, and part of them for Universal Redemption, so those of the Calvinist party began to find fault with my preaching ; for as my doctrine was too strict and severe for some of their practices, they began to cavil and find fault. And notwithstanding the church was likely to flourish, and the place was very well attended with hearers, yet the prejudices of some grew so strong, that they could not be reconciled with any thing short of my removal. Upon this a church-meeting was appointed, and votes were given for and against my continuance ; when twenty appeared for me, and only three against my continuance*. But notwithstanding

* Probably all the rest were neuter.

ing this, they could not (or rather, would not) be easy for me to stay."

On this trying occasion, he wrote for advice to the Rev. Mr. Boyce of Coningsby, in Lincolnshire; and in the following Spring attended the Association at Coningsby, where he was solicited to preach in the afternoon. He was heard at that time by two very valuable gentlemen, Messrs *Saul*, Father and Son, who were both members of the small church at Boston in the same county. After the Sermon, Mr. Saul, senior, gave him an invitation to Boston, with proper encouragement respecting his support, in case he should think it proper to leave Hull. On his return to Hull, he "found things much as usual. The people divided and contentious: nothing could go forward with comfort; no members could be received; nor the Lord's-Supper administered, with any satisfaction. It was not in the power of the disaffected party to put him away. Yet it was in their power to give him, and his friends continual trouble to prevent his usefulness; and discourage those who wished to join the church."

Mr. THOMPSON seeing no prospect of the breaches being healed, between the contending parties, after laying the case before the Lord, and imploring divine direction, he determined to leave Hull, and informed the Church at
Boston

Boston that he would admit of their application. They therefore invited him to pay them a visit. To this he consented; and after this visit, they invited him to come and reside among them. To this he also consented; and preached his farewell Sermon at Hull, Aug. 1st, 1762, to a very crowded auditory, many of whom seemed exceedingly affected, on account of his departure from them. His Sermon was from Acts xx. 27. *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.*

On his removal from Hull to Boston, he makes these pious reflections: "Alas! what removes and changes are we subject to in this wilderness state! O that all these may tend to wean us from the world, and induce us more earnestly to seek after that glorious state where changes are not known! For here we have no continuing city. O may we seek one to come, whose builder and maker is God! May we be always desiring that better country, which is an heavenly one! For most surely there remaineth a rest to all the people of God."

At his first coming to Boston, the hearers were so few that he was almost ready to be discouraged; but was comforted and encouraged by his good friend, Mr. Saul, senr. He had soon, however, a fresh proof of the instability

of all earthly comforts, in the death of this Gentleman, in June following, 1763. In him Mr. THOMPSON lost a benefactor, friend and father. On this very afflictive dispensation of providence Mr. THOMPSON wrote, " Mr. SAUL, like a Father, was always caring for us. But we were soon deprived of our father and our friend. Well, we must submit to the will of our heavenly Father, for he always careth for those who cast their care upon him; and he most assuredly knows what is best for us. O may his will be always welcome to me, whatever it brings with it, whether prosperity or adversity, health or sickness, life or death! I desire cheerfully to do and patiently to suffer, all the will of my God. I would always say, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. Not as I will, but as thou wilt.* O grant me grace, most merciful Father, to be always intirely given up to thee! As clay in the hands of the potter, so am I in thy hands, O Lord. Deal with me as seemeth good in thy sight, only make all things work together for the promoting my best and eternal welfare! May I never *think* of murmuring at any thing thou doest but always acquiesce in thy determinations, knowing that thou art righteous in all thy ways, and just, and wise in all thy doings."

Mr.

Mr. THOMPSON was on a journey into Yorkshire, when his very worthy friend Mr. SAUL was taken ill, and at his return found him at the point of death. At Mr. SAUL's request, Mr. THOMPSON preached his funeral Sermon from 1 Cor. xv. 27. *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* A text, says he, "which, I believe, was, in some great measure, agreeable to his own experience; for to all appearance he was a man of great piety, and an excellent christian. He was a very singular man for doing good to his poor relatives as well as many others; and especially to the poor saints, and ministers of Jesus Christ. Just before his death, he laid the foundation of a new Meeting-house at Boston, which he designed to build at his own expence."

As the church at Boston had no Pastor, and Mr. THOMPSON was not ordained for some time after his coming to reside there, the Lord's Supper was not frequently administered. He first mentions the administration of this ordinance July 24. 1763; and his reflections upon it the following day, are so sensible, and give so pleasing a proof of his integrity and piety, that I think they deserve to be here transcribed.

"Yesterday, says he, I had the privilege of receiving the Lord's Supper, or the blessed Communion, in solemn thanksgiving for the

Jesus Christ died for my sins. O that I may be enabled spiritually to feed on him, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed; who is the bread and water of life. After so solemn an ordinance, I desire, as in the presence of the all-seeing, heart-searching God, to renew my covenant-engagements to walk with him, and to serve and glorify him, in the best manner I am capable. O may the residue of my days be devoted to his honour and glory! I have, dearest Lord, often renewed my covenant-engagements into which I entered when I first gave myself up to thee. I have often resolved and purposed to live more entirely devoted to thy blessed will. But alas! how frequently do I come short of acting as I purpose. How do the world, and the things of it tend to draw my mind and thoughts away from thee, and things spiritual and eternal! Yet after my thoughts have been diverted by other objects, I can find no stay, nor solid satisfaction, till I return to thee again. Thou art the centre to which my soul turns, when she has been roving after other objects. For without thee all comes infinitely short of yielding satisfaction or peace of mind. I do therefore, at this time, most solemnly engage to watch against roving of mind. O Lord, keep me near thyself, and let me never more go astray from thee. O let me live near thee every day,
and

and more sensibly enjoy communion with thee. O let me more comfortably experience the enjoyment of thy favour and presence, in which real, substantial happiness consists. I had rather enjoy thee than be able to say the *world is mine*. For alas! the world, and all the enjoyments of time and sense, cannot make up a happiness suitable to the nature of this immortal soul of which I am possessed."

Mr. THOMPSON went on in the work of the Lord at Boston, with considerable success; and was esteemed by his people, and those of the town, and neighbourhood in general. He was candid and obliging, a lover of peace, an honest friend of truth, and of an exemplary conversation. He preached the peculiar doctrines of the gospel with diligence, freedom and plainness. He improved them all to those practical and animating purposes which they are evidently adapted to subserve. He addressed them to the consciences of his hearers; and many were awakened, and converted. He applied them to the various purposes of holiness and comfort in the christian life, and had the pleasure to observe that they produced their effects in the establishment, consolation, and purification of those who had "believed through grace:" and thus the "pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hand."

He by no means confined his labours to Boston. But like one who *naturally* cared for the souls of men, he cheerfully embraced opportunities of preaching in convenient houses of his friends, at the distance of two, three, four, and seven miles from his meeting-house. Thus he fed his people on common days, as well as on Lord's days, with spiritual and living bread. On these occasions many could attend who were too feeble to come frequently to the public worship on the Lord's day; and many who perhaps would otherwise never have attended divine worship at all, came to these *week-day meetings*, as they were called, were convinced, received the gospel, and were brought to the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Happy would it be for mankind, if all ministers were equally assiduous in their endeavours to turn sinners "*from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.*"

Nor was his zeal bounded within the limits of his own people, notwithstanding these his various labours among them. He frequently visited the churches in other parts of Lincolnshire, and sometimes made longer journeys into Yorkshire, and the middle Counties of England. The disadvantages, therefore, sustained by his death, will extend to various parts. MALTBY, MUNKSTHORP, CONINGSBY, GOSBERTON, SPALDING, and FLEET, have especially,

cially, for a number of years past, enjoyed the benefit of his occasional labours.

Mr. THOMPSON's situation in life enabled him to be more extensively useful to mankind than many other ministers can be. He was in easy, though not in very affluent circumstances. His connections were advantageous. He had not the encumbrance of a numerous family. He was therefore much more at liberty than many others are, and on these accounts, the loss of him will be the more sensibly felt and regretted.

It may be acknowledged that Mr. THOMPSON's natural abilities were not eminently great. They were superior to those of many other ministers; but did not rise far above mediocrity. His excellency lay chiefly in employing them to the best purposes. Having by grace been made deeply acquainted with his own miserable condition as a sinner, and being impressed with the consideration of the worth of souls, and the infinite importance of that salvation which is exhibited to man in the gospel, and having an ardent affection for the welfare of his fellow creatures, he did not trifle about unnecessary enquiries, and subtle disquisitions, respecting subjects not to be known, or of little use when they are known; but confined himself chiefly to those important doctrines and duties which are clearly revealed, and upon
attention

attention to which our happiness for time and eternity depends.

The ruined condition of all men by sin, the insufficiency of our own righteousness to recommend us to a holy God, salvation by free grace, through the Lord Jesus Christ, the necessity and nature of repentance, of faith in the blessed Redeemer, of regeneration and universal holiness, with the awful glories of the world to come, and the scriptural evidences of being prepared for heaven ; these were the subjects on which he principally insisted in the course of his ministry. To this, and not to eminently superior abilities, it always appeared to me, that the success of his ministrations was to be ascribed.

The Baptist Meeting-house at Boston, when he came thither, was small, and in a very poor condition indeed, as well as in a very inconvenient situation. The hearers were but few, and chiefly of the lower sort. Mr. Thompson therefore laboured under many disadvantages ; but he trusted in his God ; and was encouraged and supported by his invaluable friend, Mr. Saul ; who, as he often afterwards gratefully observed, was like a father to him and his family. His labours were, through the blessing of God, more useful than could have been expected, in such circumstances. In September 1763, five persons were baptized, and received into
fellowship

fellowship, and the congregation increased considerably.

The new Meeting-house, of which good Mr. Saul had this year laid the foundation, was neatly finished by his son at his own expence, in June the year following. It will, I doubt not, be long viewed, as a monument of the piety and generosity in which both Father and Son were happily united ; and for which they ought always to be remembered with gratitude by the Congregation at Boston. It was opened, and three discourses delivered in it, to crowded congregations, by the Compiler of these Memoirs, on June 24th, 1764. On the mention of which Mr. THOMPSON in his Diary, breathes out this ardent ejaculation. “ O that the Lord may be pleased to fill the house with glory—that many sinners may be born saints there !”

S E C T II.

An Account of his Ordination, and the Views which he then had, and afterwards retained, of the Ministerial Office.

Mr. THOMPSON on the twenty-fourth of September, 1764. was ordained to the Pastoral Office at Boston, by the Rev. GILBERT BOYCE, of Coningsby, who is yet living, beyond his eightieth year ; and who was what some of the
General

General Baptists call their Messenger. Mr. BOYCE on that occasion, delivered a discourse on 2 Cor. ii. 16. "Who is sufficient for these things?"

By Mr. THOMPSON'S reflections, it appears that he did not enter upon that great work in a careless and trifling frame of mind; but under the impression of its great and awful importance. Since I have undertook, says he, so great a charge as the Pastoral care of a Church of Christ, I shall now stand in need of greater gifts, and greater grace, in order to discharge all, and every part of the great work to which the Lord has called me.—Sensible I am, it is a very great work that lies upon me, and *who is sufficient for these things?* O what a mercy it is that *all our sufficiency is of God!*—I hope I may be allowed to say with Saint Paul, that *I can do all things* which the Lord calls me to do, *through Christ* (my Lord and Master) *strengthening me.*"

Nor did he ever lose sight of the solemn nature of the pastoral office. He appears impressed with it to the end of his life; and to form new resolutions of attention and diligence, from time to time, in a manner which conduced much to his own advantage, and that of the people under his care. A few extracts from his diary to evince this, will not, I think, be unprofitable

unprofitable to the reader, especially to young Ministers.

Aug. 27. 1765. "We had a meeting for Church discipline, which we stand in great need of. O that the Lord would make us just such a church as he would have us to be! found in the faith, pure in worship, and holy in conversation! I would, in my meditations, in my preaching, and converse, dwell upon the freeness of Salvation by Jesus Christ, and the fullness and preciousness of the promises, more than I have done; judging it to be necessary for my own comfort, and the comfort of others. I would do all I possibly can, to open the way of life. I would read the Scriptures more, and authors less.—I would preach up the law more frequently, in order to convict sinners, and to drive Pharisees from a legal foundation. Let persons be brought to see their guilt and danger, by breaking the law of God, then they will attend to the preaching of a free Salvation by Jesus Christ. When they are brought to cry out, *What must we do to be saved?* then salvation by faith in Jesus Christ will be a precious doctrine to them." Were all young preachers to imbibe these views, and form these resolutions, I am clearly of opinion, that the state of religion in the world would soon be very superior to what it now is.

May

May 11. 1766. Mr. Thompson mentions an *excellent sermon*, which he had heard; and adds, "O that it were engraven upon my heart, in order that it might be transcribed in my life and ministry, every day, through the future part of my life. I want to be more earnestly engaged in improving my time, my precious time, to the best advantage.—O that my mind was more impressed with a deep sense of the greatness of the work which I am called to, and which lies upon my hands! I am too apt to trifle away my precious time. I have great reason to be ashamed of myself, when I consider how much time I have had for more than seven years past, and how little I have done for the Lord of my life; time, and every blessing. Lord teach, quicken, guide, counsel, and strengthen me, that I may be more diligent for the future!"

"Aug. 18. 1768. This day it is ten years since I went to Hull to preach the Gospel: bleis the Lord, O my soul, that he hath so long preserved me in life, and so liberally supplied all my wants. I have met with many difficulties in these ten years, from different quarters. But by the grace of God I am what I am. Praise his holy name for ever! But in the ten years past, what have I done for the Lord in the character of a gospel Minister? At Hull we had twenty-three persons added to the Church

Church, and I hope several of them really converted : But others of them, I am afraid of. At Boston we have added thirty-two ; and I hope the greatest part are really converted. But God only sees the heart. I am afraid many ministers, (and I for one) will suffer loss at the great day ; for that day shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.—Lord make me faithful, that I may be pure from the blood of all men !”

“ Oct. 2. 1769.—I sometimes think that by exerting myself so much in the work of preaching, I shall bring on a consumption, or some habitual weakness of body. Yet I don't know how to avoid it.—Lord make me willing to spend and be spent in thy service. May none of these things move me, so that I may but finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

“ Sept. 24. 1770. It is six years, this day, since I was ordained pastor over this church. Ah me, how time runs away ! How little have I done for my blessed Master, who has done so much for me ! Lord, quicken me to greater zeal and diligence ! and make me a pastor after thine own heart ; that I may feed thy people with spiritual food, with knowledge and understanding, that thou mayest be glorified both by them and me !”

May 11. 1766. Mr. Thompson mentions an *excellent sermon*, which he had heard; and adds, "O that it were engraven upon my heart, in order that it might be transcribed in my life and ministry, every day, through the future part of my life. I want to be more earnestly engaged in improving my time, my precious time, to the best advantage.—O that my mind was more impressed with a deep sense of the greatness of the work which I am called to, and which lies upon my hands! I am too apt to trifle away my precious time. I have great reason to be ashamed of myself, when I consider how much time I have had for more than seven years past, and how little I have done for the Lord of my life; time, and every blessing. Lord teach, quicken, guide, counsel, and strengthen me, that I may be more diligent for the future!"

"Aug. 18. 1768. This day it is ten years since I went to Hull to preach the Gospel: bleis the Lord, O my soul, that he hath so long preserved me in life, and so liberally supplied all my wants. I have met with many difficulties in these ten years, from different quarters. But by the grace of God I am what I am. Praise his holy name for ever! But in the ten years past, what have I done for the Lord in the character of a gospel Minister? At Hull we had twenty-three persons added to the Church

Church, and I hope several of them really converted: But others of them, I am afraid of. At Boston we have added thirty-two; and I hope the greatest part are really converted. But God only sees the heart. I am afraid many ministers, (and I for one) will suffer loss at the great day; for that day shall try every man's work, of what sort it is.—Lord make me faithful, that I may be pure from the blood of all men!”

“ Oct. 2. 1769.—I sometimes think that by exerting myself so much in the work of preaching, I shall bring on a consumption, or some habitual weakness of body. Yet I don't know how to avoid it.—Lord make me willing to spend and be spent in thy service. May none of these things move me, so that I may but finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

“ Sept. 24. 1770. It is six years, this day, since I was ordained pastor over this church. Ah me, how time runs away! How little have I done for my blessed Master, who has done so much for me! Lord, quicken me to greater zeal and diligence! and make me a pastor after thine own heart; that I may feed thy people with spiritual food, with knowledge and understanding, that thou mayest be glorified both by them and me!”

Jan. 25. 1773. After mentioning some of his ministerial labours, he adds, " Lord bless my poor feeble endeavours at home and abroad ! I am a poor unworthy instrument to be employed in thy service ; and thou mightest long ago, have laid me aside, as such ; but art still pleased to employ me. O let not my unworthiness hinder me from being useful to immortal souls ; but own thy word, and let thy pleasure prosper in my hands !"

Mr. THOMPSON in his diary frequently acknowledges what he apprehends to have been defective in his ministerial labours, and resolves upon improvement. This, I think, discovered his anxiety to do the work of his great Master, and was one mean of his usefulness. It may be of service to young ministers to read a few of his observations on this subject.

April 8. 1776. " A pleasing address in a gospel minister is a great recommendation. I want to improve in this, and to contract my discourses into less room.—I would study what ought *not* to be said, as well as what ought. I am very much hurt by speaking long, fast, and loud : I must guard against these three things. Why should I hold so long, to tire and weary people, and kill myself ? But O ! I find it very hard work to do as I know I ought, even in this respect.—It is a great thing to be a christian, and a greater to be a lively christian,
and

and a christian minister, well accomplished for the work of the ministry. Pulpit work is great; Visiting work is great; Governing work is great: Every part of a minister's work is great and difficult. *Who is sufficient for these things?*

Jan. 5. 1778. "I desire to be kept lively in my soul as a christian; and to be increasing in gifts for the ministerial work, in all its parts and branches. Let me read, pray, study, converse with serious persons. &c."

April 27. 1778. "O what an important work is preaching the gospel! To instruct calmly, to convince powerfully, to persuade affectionately, to comfort tenderly, and to teach duties evangelically."

July 14. 1783. "I wish to keep four things constantly in view. 1. To read my bible through. 2. To read a short portion at a time, in a devotional way, with meditation. 3. To read it as a student and minister, for public work. 4. To read it as a critic, in order to find out the meaning of difficult passages."

July 27. 1787. "What a vastly important work is preaching the everlasting gospel! Alas, few, (perhaps none) when they first enter upon it, apprehend what a work it is. To understand the scriptures, and to be able to expound them; to pray in public with propriety, suitable to all occasions, at all times, with a truly devotional spirit; to find suitable portions
of

of scripture ; and to be quite master of one's text ; properly to introduce it, to explain it, to divide it, in a natural and easy manner ; then to illustrate the several branches of the division, and deliver useful matter through the whole ; to improve or apply the several parts of the subject to different classes of hearers, in a convincing instructive manner, getting at the consciences of sinners, encouraging enquirers, and edifying and comforting the people of God ; *This is a great work.*

“ And then to deliver one's matter in a manner that is pleasing and acceptable ; to pronounce and accent well ; to speak with propriety, good language, easy to be understood, the periods short, and sentences striking ; to speak neither too fast, nor too slow, too loud, nor too low. To inform the judgement, and at the same time, touch the passions ; to give a suitable word to all ; to send away the audience pleased and profited ; to hold long enough, and not too long ; to have always an useful variety of texts, method and matter ; to open the law, and to preach the glorious gospel to poor sinners ; to speak in a comfortable manner to saints, of their privileges, promises and prospects ; and at the same time, to set before them their respective duties, religious, relative, social and personal ; and to enforce all these by
evangelical

evangelical motives, so as to affect and quicken to practice.—O what an arduous work !”

And then, if we take into the account the duties of the *pastoral* office, it will make the ministerial work appear more important still. Duly to administer the sacraments, to rule a christian society according to the scripture; to keep up order, and maintain unity among them; to speak a seasonable word to every individual we visit, or who may apply for advice on various occasions; to keep up a becoming zeal, and the life and power of religion among them for a course of years. This is a very difficult work. “*Who is sufficient for these things?*”

It will appear afterwards that Mr. THOMPSON was candid and kind to those who differed from him. He was also very ready to overlook the defects of those preachers whose abilities were inferior to his own. When he made remarks on the performances of others, to their disadvantage, it was generally in a way of admonition to himself, or to serve some good practical purpose. One instance of this kind, may, I think, be of use to young preachers, and so may answer the general purpose for which these memoirs are intended.

“ Nov. 16. 1787. I heard Mr. — in the evening, from psalm lxxxiv. 1. *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts.* He speaks bad english, and shouts amazingly, which makes
it

it very unpleasant to hear him. He observed no method, but spake in a rambling unconnected way, and hawled in his peculiar sentiments in an awkward manner. I wish ministers would remember that the grand design of preaching is to convert poor sinners, by giving them proper instructions, concerning God, themselves, and the Saviour. Lord help me to remember this perpetually, and never to lose sight of it in my public preaching: and may thy blessing attend!"

A short reflection made by him a few months before his dissolution, though perhaps not exactly in point, may be here inserted; as it will give pleasure to his friends, and in a good degree evince, that he retained the same serious view of the ministerial work to the end of his life. "Sept. 24. 1793. I have lived to see the Autumnal Equinox once more return. How wonderful that I am yet alive, after suffering so much affliction, pain, and trouble! O may I live more and more unto the Lord, and stand prepared to die unto the Lord! This day twenty-nine years I was ordained, and set over the church at Boston, as their Pastor; and though unworthy of the office, and very imperfect in the discharge of the various duties of it, yet I am continued in it for so many years; and I hope, with a good degree of respect and reputation from my people and others. I know
more

more of my imperfections than any other knows of me. May my few remaining days be spent to very good purposes ! I am very feeble, both in body and mind. The good Lord strengthen both, if it be his will !” This was written less than five months before Mr. Thompson’s death.

S E C T. III.

Mr. THOMPSON’S Struggles and Doubts, respecting the Truth of his Conversion, and his interest in Christ ; and the means he used for Satisfaction.

MR. THOMPSON like many other eminent children of God, had various struggles with unbelief, and fears lest he should deceive himself ; especially in the former part of his profession, and ministry. His mind was tender. He was very subject to nervous complaints ; and, which is not unfrequently the case, it was some time before he arrived at that clear view of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, and of the genuine proofs of true conversion, which so happily conduce to the establishment of the soul, as to keep it free from darkness and embarrassments. A few extracts from his diary, respecting these subjects may be of service to the conscientious reader.

Feb. 4. 1764. “ Alas ! how have I gone sorrowing for some weeks past ! How am I tormented with slavish fears ! How am I beset with doubts and scruples ! How am I surround-
ed

ed with clouds and darkneſs ! Indeed, I may ſay, with the Pſalmiſt, that I go mourning all the day long. O What remainders of unbelief ! Lord increaſe my faith ! Art not thou faithfulneſs itſelf ? Are not all thy promiſes certain and ſure ? Have they not all been ſealed with blood ? Are they not all made in Chriſt Jeſus ? And has he not done whatever is neceſſary for a ſinner's acceptance with God ? And doſt thou not, my ſoul, believe in this Saviour ? Haſt thou not received him in all his offices ? And are not the promiſes made to all who believe in, and cordially receive him ? O then, *why caſt down, my ſoul ?*

“ Take comfort from, and learn to live upon, the naked promiſes. Do not pore ſo much upon thy ſinfulneſs, and think ſo little upon Jeſus's fulneſs, ſuitableneſs and ſufficiency. Cloſely meditate upon redeeming and ſin-pardoning love. Let me not always dwell upon the dark ſide : But let me remember redeeming love. O my God ! how wonderful, how admirable is thy love, which thou haſt manifested towards a loſt, guilty, dying world, in the gift of thy dear Son ! Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, for his love towards mankind in general ; but more eſpecially for what he has done for me in particular. Bleſſed be God that ever I heard the Goſpel ! Bleſſed be his name for enlightening, heart-changing, ſoul-renewing grace !
Bleſſed

Blessed be his name, that ever I was warned to flee from the wrath to come; that ever I was enabled to leave my sins; that ever I was driven from trusting in my own righteousness! How many yet go on in sinful ways. How many are resting in their own unrighteous, imperfect righteousness! Lord I acknowledge it is thy grace that made me to differ. But as thy grace is free for me, so for all. O that thousands, and tens of thousands might partake of it, who yet abide in sin, and self-righteousness! I would bless thy name for ever, O my dear Redeemer, on account of what thou hast done for me, in that thou hast died in my stead, died that I might not suffer eternally. I receive thy active and passive obedience as the ground of my hope. Let my soul ever be cloathed with the garment of thine immaculate spotless righteousness; for thou art *The Lord my righteousness*;"

"I desire to bless thee, O my God, for what thou hast, by thy blessed spirit, wrought in me; that thou hast enlightened my mind, renewed my will, and changed my affections. I bless thy name that thou hast given me power over sin, and strength to stand against the Devil. I thank thee that grace reigns in my heart, where sin once reigned. I would praise thy name for ever, that thou hast had patience with me, that I am saved from eternal death; that I am called; and that thou hast been graciously pleased
to

to carry on thy good work in my soul, notwithstanding I have often backslidden from thee. O that gracious promise, "I will heal their backslidings, and love them freely." I praise thee, Lord, for all thou hast done for me, and for all thou hast wrought in me. And O suffer me to bless thee for the poor little which I have done towards the glorifying of thy name amongst men. I acknowledge that it is not worth naming it is so little; yet to the praise of thy grace will I mention it."

"O my God, I yet want much. I am not what I desire to be. I am neither so holy, nor so happy as I would be. O do thou perfect that which is still lacking in me. Lord, increase my comforts, and enable me to rejoice in the sensible enjoyment of thy favour and presence. Thou knowest, O Lord, that nothing short of this can satisfy the longing desires of my soul. O do though weaken my corruptions. Root out the monster unbelief. O strengthen my faith. Encrease my love and zeal, and hope, and humility, and patience, and wisdom, and contentment, and every grace. And, O Lord, quicken me by thy spirit, that I may be more earnest after heavenly things. O give me, every day, a spirit of grace and supplication; until I am completely happy in thy favour, and thine image be fully restored in my soul, and I be fit indeed for the heavenly world." Mr. Thompson wrote

wrote this in his twenty-ninth year; and I am persuaded all who are acquainted with the grace of God in truth will allow that the spirit which lies so low and humble at the footstool of the Almighty, which so cordially honours the Lord Jesus Christ, which so ardently breaths after improvement in the divine life, is in no small degree, by the grace of God, fitted for usefulness in the church; and that a person may indulge scruples respecting his spiritual state, which are absolutely without foundation. The cause of these scruples in him, and, I apprehend, in many other truly converted persons, may be seen in the following paragraphs which he wrote on the 20th of August, the same year, and which I beg leave to recommend to the particular attention of young Christians.

“I, for some years past, have been seeking the knowledge of pardon, and assurance of God’s love, from some inward sensations expecting to have my mind impressed with a sense of forgiveness, and divine favour. But I too much neglected the word of God. I could have been glad to have heard a voice assuring me that my sins were blotted out, &c. But, ordinarily, we have no ground to expect any such thing. Blessed be the Lord for his unerring word! and blessed are those whose names are written in that book of life: who find those marks and characters stamped upon their souls, which are so clearly

clearly laid down in the sacred pages. Blessed be the Lord for this *sweet experience*."

"I have lately had different views of assurance, and the way of obtaining it. That is, by examining whether I am a true believer, according to the account given of such in the Scripture. And upon proving myself a believer, inferring, or concluding from thence, that my sins are pardoned; and that I am a child, and an heir of glory. For we are assured in the blessed word of God, that whosoever believeth on Christ is justified from all things. Acts xiii. 39. That such do receive the remission of sins. Acts x. 43. That as many as receive Christ do become the sons of God. John i. 12. And that all true believers are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal. iii. 26."

"Now from such Scriptures as these it is plain that whosoever can prove himself a true believer, may, at the same time prove that his sins are all forgiven, that he is justified, and is a child of God; because they assure us that such privileges belong to the believer. But it must be such a faith as is preceded by true repentance. Such a faith as works by love, purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and is productive of universal obedience to the commands of Christ. Whosoever hath such a faith as this, sure I am, from the word of God, which cannot deceive us, that such are pardoned, justified, adopted

adopted, and heirs of eternal life." The change which had now taken place in Mr. Thompson's mind, on this subject, was of great use to him afterwards, both as a christian and a minister. On this ground he afterwards practised the great duty of self-examination; and recommended it to others, to do the same. A specimen of his manner of self-examination, after the change above-mentioned, may be seen in the following extract.

" Nov. 27, 1764. This day I am twenty-nine years old—Perhaps this may be my last year on earth.—Weil, my soul, art thou prepared for death? Canst thou read thy title clear in the sacred scriptures, to mansions in the skies? Canst thou prove thyself a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ! Art thou regenerated by his spirit? Dost thou bear his image? Dost thou copy after his example? Dost thou delight in his ordinances? Dost thou long to serve him better? Dost thou long for heaven because thou art weary of sin, and wantest to be made perfectly holy, as well as happy?"

" I hope I can answer each of these queries in the affirmative. I hope I bear these living characters. But I want greater satisfaction concerning the certainty of these important things. I dare not say 'I do not experience such things as I have mentioned above; and yet I cannot *always* say I do. I am therefore
I resolved

resolved what to do. I will endeavour to search the book of God, and the book of my own heart, and see if (by the help of the Lord,) I cannot make them agree with each other. Then shall I in this sense, have made my calling and election sure. And O, the delightful privilege of assurance of salvation! I am sure it is worth all the pains that can be bestowed in seeking after it. It deserves all our diligence. GIVE DILIGENCE, then, my soul to find this pearl*.”

The satisfaction he experienced from this method of self examination, appears from his diary in future years. The two following specimens in this view, may not be unworthy of the serious reader's attention.

“ Jan. 27 1766. I think, for some weeks past, I have had a more comfortable persuasion of my interest in Christ, and union to him, than I ever have had, for so long a time together, in the course of my experience. And I think it is upon good grounds; i.e. from scripture testimony. I desire to read the word with a more applicatory faith, taking what I read, as if it were written to me in particular. The Lord says, Isai. lv. 1. HO, EVERY ONE; and Rev. ii. and iii. chapters, “ *He that hat h
an*

* Mr. Thompson evidently alludes to 2 Pet. i. 10. But whether his view of the meaning of the Apostle's words be accurate, may deserve the Reader's consideration.

an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith." Allo Mark xiii. 37. "What I say unto *you*, I say unto *all*." O, then, let me endeavour to receive the word to myself with all readiness of mind. I desire to be digging daily in the sacred mines of Scripture, as for hidden treasures, Lord, let me find grace, all-sufficient grace, here, and eternal glory hereafter!"

"July 8. 1789. Enquiry into scriptural conversion. 1. The Jews were pricked in their hearts, being convicted of their guilt and danger. Acts ii. 2. The Jailor earnestly enquired what he must do to be saved. Acts xvi. 30. 3. Those whom John baptized confessed their sins. Mat. iii. 4. The penitent publican's prayer was, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Luke xviii. 5. True humility of mind is commended by our Saviour. Mat. v. 3. Luke xviii. 14. 6. Paul mentions godly sorrow. 1 Cor. vii. 10. and Jesus said, "Blessed are they that mourn." Mat. v. 4. 7. Believing and turning to the Lord is mentioned. Acts xiv. 21. 8. Believing on, coming to, and trusting in Jesus Christ are often mentioned as belonging to sound conversion. Acts xvi. 31. Ephes. i. 13. 9. Living to Christ follows, and is the best, and most substantial evidence of a true scriptural conversion. 2 Cor. v. 15.

Now let the enquiry be, *am I thus converted?* Knowing this in theory, and talking of it, will

not avail, unless I am the subject of it, and know it experimentally and practically. I hope I am really acquainted with what belongs to a saving conversion; and that the tenor of my life for thirty-four years past, has evidenced that I am not deceived. Indeed I am conscious of many imperfections. But I look for the pardoning mercy of a gracious God in Jesus Christ, and hope for acceptance, first and last, only through a dear, dying, everliving, and most gracious Redeemer."

I believe it will please the friends of this good minister of Jesus Christ, and the serious readers of these Memoirs, to know how he viewed approaching death, when he drew near the close of life. I therefore transcribe the last paragraph in his diary, written less than a month before his dissolution.

"Jan. 14. 1794. For fifty-eight years I have been receiving very many mercies for which I desire to be thankful. For thirty-eight I have acted under a religious profession, and generally under the character of a minister of the gospel. I have many reasons to be humbled. I trust I know whom I have believed, and that I have a good hope through grace, according to the precious promise of eternal life in Christ Jesus my dear Saviour. It appears that I have some symptoms of a dropical disorder, which most likely will end in death, and perhaps

haps, in a short time. Let me be continually expecting the all-important change, as it were every day; for I know not which day will be the very last. Lord make me both habitually and actually ready. Amen! Amen!"

S E C T. IV.

Mr. THOMPSON'S conscientious improvement of Time, and attention to the Revolutions of it.

Time is an invaluable blessing; and must be accounted for at the divine tribunal, when the busy scenes of life are past. It is therefore the duty as well as the interest, of every man to employ it in the most useful manner. Of this Mr. Thompson was sensible, and, in an early life, resolved upon the improvement of it in the best manner, and to the most valuable purposes. As an evidence of his integrity in this respect, a few extracts from his Diary will, I trust, be of service, to readers in general, and especially to young Ministers, so far as their circumstances may resemble his.

On June 19. 1765, he wrote in the following manner, "I purpose and resolve, in the strength of the Lord, to divide every day, and appoint myself work and employment for every part of the day; lest I trifle away my precious time. I acknowledge that I have not been so careful to manage and husband it well, as I

ought. How much time is gone, even since I was called from the world, to preach the gospel! Alas! I have made but little improvement. What vast improvement some have made in the space of a few years! O my slothful, indolent soul! be ashamed, and rouse thyself from thy supineness, and work while it is called to-day."

"I would observe, every day, some such method as this.

1. "In the morning, in summer, rise about six o'clock, and in rising up, and putting on my cloaths, I would lift up my heart in praise and prayer to God.

2. "I would then take a morning walk, or be employed about something in my garden, while I meditate upon some portion of Scripture; and, before breakfast, would retire for private prayer, &c. Breakfast at eight o'clock.

3. "Family-worship after breakfast.

4. "Then retire to read, search, and study the Scriptures, until twelve o'clock. After that take a little air and exercise till dinner.

5. "After dinner, read news-papers, magazines, &c. and then for two hours, till about four o'clock, read sermons, systems of divinity, or controversies.

6. "About four, go to visit some friend, and endeavour to promote heavenly conversation.

7. "Re-

7. "Return home at seven; sup at eight; family-worship at nine; and be always in bed at ten. Lord, guide me by thy counsel, into the best method of spending and improving every day of my life. Time is precious. Time, how short! Eternity, how long! My work is great. My heart how slothful! Lord quicken me! Strengthen me by thy blessed spirit. I will even run in the way of thy commandments, when thou hast enlarged my heart."

It may be here observed, that though the preceding paragraphs discover the conscientious regard which Mr. Thompson paid to the manner in which he employed his time; yet every wise man will take such methods, and arrange his business in such a manner as he believes in his conscience to be most advantageous to himself and others, and most agreeable to the circumstances in which he is placed, and the various duties incumbent upon him. It is one among many proofs of divine wisdom and goodness, that no particular rules are given us on this head: because that method which is very easy and convenient to one, might be very embarrassing to another.

On the return of his own birth day, the birth-day of his daughter, and on many other occasions, he has generally some pious meditation upon the shortness of life, and the value of time: With which he generally connects some
humble

humble acknowledgments of little improvement, and ardent breathings to employ his time better in future. Thus, Nov. 27, 1765, he writes,

“ Now, through the sparing goodness and tender mercies of the Lord, I am arrived at the end of my thirtieth year. O how gracious the Lord is, in sparing me one year after another ! May I be truly thankful ! And may I be enabled to improve every year, month, week, and day, to the glory of Him who is the giver and preserver of my life ! O how little do I grow in grace and holiness in one year ! and, how short is the life of Man ! Infancy, Childhood, and youthful vanities take up many of our first years ; eating, drinking, dressing, worldly cares, business, &c. &c. take up very much of what remains. But I desire that the future part of my life may be spent in the service of God, and to his glory. This may be my last year. I desire to be looking for, and expecting death, not only every year, but every week, and every day. May I be ready whenever death approaches ; that I may then have nothing to do, but to *de*. I am conscious of many imperfections attending me daily. But I trust I am in Christ, and if so, sin is not imputed to me, but forgiven. I desire to do more for God this year than I have ever in one year before Good Lord strengthen me ! May
I be

I be able to give all diligence to make my calling and election sure."

"Jan. 1. 1766. Another year is gone. Upon a new year I am entered. Whether I shall live to see the conclusion of it or not, the Lord only knows. O that I may be enabled to live this year more to God's glory than any former year of my life! Surely we may have a true taste of life, and yet a constant thought of death.

"As I live in a world where all the scenes are changing, let me be expecting affliction and tribulations. Indeed at present I live under the sunshine of prosperity. But how soon may my day be turned into night; my health into sickness, and my prosperity into the darkest adversity! Let me be looking for changing scenes. I may soon be afflicted in body, in mind, in my friends and relations; for all my earthly comforts stand upon a precarious foundation. Well, but have I not a more enduring substance? Let me look towards that good land where changes are never known, If God be my portion, I have enough. He is a suitable, substantial, unchangeable, and everlasting good. Let me then take comfort from this quarter every day and hour. God is an inexhaustible fountain of living pleasures. He will give grace and glory, and will withhold no good thing."

"July

“ July 15. 1768. Seven years are now gone, (to come no more!) since I entered into a marriage state. O how time passeth away! How quickly do years roll over! What has been transacted, and what I have met with in these seven years, seems just like a dream of the night. Indeed our whole life is a dream, “ a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away!” Many difficulties have I met with; especially in a spiritual respect, in my Christian experience. Yet many blessings, both temporal and spiritual, I have received in these seven years. So that if I balance troubles and crosses, trials and difficulties, with mercies and blessings which I have received, I must confess my mercies would abundantly outweigh my crosses. Bless the Lord, O my Soul, for all his goodness shewn to me and my family the seven years past. O let me trust in him for the future, both for temporals and spirituals; for time and eternity!”

“ Jan. 4. 1769. The old year is past and gone, to come no more. The new year is begun; but none knows who shall live to see its conclusion, except Him who knows all things. O how gracious the Lord is in sparing me year after year! May I indeed be taught so to number my days, that I may apply my heart constantly to wisdom, in improving time to the very best advantage! I have abundant reason

to

to lament over time squandered away and mis-improved. O let me redeem time past, by a double improvement of time present. Past time is no more. Future time is uncertain. Only present time is my own. Soon, Soon, the Arch angel may lift up his hand, and swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, that *time shall be no longer*. Now, now, is the accepted time, and the day of Salvation. It is to-day if we will hear; not tomorrow."

In this manner, it appears, throughout his Diary, that Mr. Thompson's mind was impressed with a sense of the value of time, and awakened to an ardent desire to improve it well. May every reader of these Memoirs, and the compiler of them, live daily under the same impressions!

S E C T. V.

Mr. THOMPSON's steady regard to what he apprehended to be Truth—His Candour towards those from whom he differed—and his grief on account of Contentions among Christians.

Mr. THOMPSON had considerable acquaintance with persons whose religious principles differed greatly from those which he adopted; and he met with no small opposition from some of them. But those who are acquainted with him well know that he was remarkably steady in maintaining what he judged to be according to Scripture, whoever acted in a different manner;

manner ; or whatever he might suffer in consequence of his faith and practice. In this, and in every other respect, so far as I can judge, there is a very exact agreement between what is contained in his diary, and what appeared in his behaviour. This, I think, adds greatly to the excellency of his general character. An extract from his Diary, towards the close of his life, will sufficiently explain his views, and discover his disposition respecting this subject : and his whole life ; during more than thirty years profession of Christianity, fully evinces the sincerity with which he writes.

“ July 19. 1792. Whatever good opinion I may have of, or respect for, persons of various parties among Christians, in the establishment, the methodists, presbyterians, independents, quakers, or even the particular baptists, I think I can assign good and substantial reasons why I could not join those societies ; but must be still a General-Baptist minister ; or, if a private person, a member of a General-Baptist Church. I hope I really love all truly gracious persons of every denomination. But I believe our principles, and manner of gathering and governing churches, the most scriptural of any denomination ; and on that account, I am a General Baptist from a principle of conscience.”

That he had similar views from the beginning of his ministry is evident from various parts of his

his Diary. I trust it will not be ascribed to a spirit of malevolence, or an inclination to excite contentions, if I observe that there is at Boston, a particular Baptist Church, whose meeting-house is near to that in which Mr. Thompson preached. When he had been a little while in Boston, as we have seen above, the work of God prospered in his hands. But his Calvinist Brethren at that time treated his hearers with less liberality than might have been wished : I, and undoubtedly many others, perfectly remember the trials which Mr. Thompson had on that occasion. I am happy in believing that the two parties, are now upon more candid terms with each other. On this occasion Mr. Thompson, on December 6, and 29th, 1766, wrote as follows :

“ I am like to be perplexed again by the Calvinists, in some such manner as I was at Hull. It is strange that persons should be so fond of those tenets, which, according to my apprehensions, are contrary to the divine perfections, and have no foundation in the Word of God. I think, while in the course of my preaching, I have been guarding against one extreme. (viz. leaning to works for acceptance) I have not taken such care as I ought, to guard the other side. I would endeavour for the future, to guard against both extremes. I would speak more freely of God’s universal love to

K

men

men in the gift of his Son, the extent of Christ's death, the sufficiency of the means of grace, &c. Lord, if these things are right, enable me to mention them with a Christian temper and spirit, agreeable to thy blessed mind and will."

"O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night, because of the divisions of Zion! What work do contentions make among the people of God, in the churches of Christ! O what a difficult thing it is to be a faithful minister, and to act among a divided people with prudence, candour, temper and moderation, and yet be faithful to all! Lord support me! Lord direct me! Lord make me faithful!"

"Sep. 21. 1768. I have trouble (as a minister) from two sorts of persons: Such as maintain Justification from Eternity; and on the other hand, such as would have works brought in for a sinner's acceptance with God. Both these are, as I conceive, errors of judgment, which ought to be opposed: and I desire in the most mild and prudent manner to oppose them, in maintaining the glorious doctrine of justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believing sinner. For by him all that believe are justified. Acts xiii. 39."

"Nov. 27. 1768. I desire to guard against a narrow uncharitable disposition with respect to other persons, who differ from me in religious sentiments. Wherever I perceive a regard
for

for Christ and true religion in any person, that person I would love, though of very different sentiments from myself. O what wretched work doth uncharitableness make amongst professors! What strange dividing and subdividing there is among christians in our day! May the blessed time commence when all shall be of one heart, and of one soul; of one mind, and of one judgment. When spiritual war shall be learnt no more; but peace and concord reign through all God's Zion." His diary frequently abounds with evidence that he was cordial in his esteem of good men, whatever was the party to which they belonged. He often speaks of those who differed from himself in the most affectionate manner. A few extracts out of a great multitude, will evince this.

"March 17. 1773. I heard Mr. — a methodist preacher, a man of good natural and acquired abilities, and a good speaker. Had some conversation with him, and his company was very agreeable, entertaining, and instructive. I wish I had such a one to converse with often."

April 9. 1773. I went to hear Mr. — an enlightened Clergyman who is a lively zealous young man, though his abilities for preaching are not great. Yet I hope he has been and still will be useful. I wish there were more awakening ministers in the church of England, to

alarm the sleepy consciences of those who attend upon them."

The next paragraph not only answers our general purpose, to evince Mr. THOMPSON'S candour; but likewise gives us solid instruction upon a very important practical subject: and points out to young people in general, and young ministers in particular, a good method of preserving the outlines of a sermon to advantage.

"April 19. 1773. I heard Mr.—— a serious young clergyman, at a Visitation, from Mat. v. 13. *Ye are the salt of the earth*. A very ingenious discourse. He took notice, that with propriety the Apostles might be stiled the *salt of the earth*; as both Jews and heathens were strangely corrupt. But that Ministers now, also might be stiled *the salt of the earth*. For even in our age and nation, men are corrupt and sinful, ignorant and wicked; and there is but little experimental religion. He then shewed how ministers are to be the salt of the earth: That they ought to act with a view to the glory of God, and the good of souls: that they ought to preach sound doctrine, and live good lives: that they ought to open the fall of man; to set forth the spirituality of the law; to call sinners to repent, and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ for Justification."

"He proposed St. Paul as an example for them

them to copy after. He told them ministers may find different employment than diversions in the fields, at the card-table, or dice-board : that they ought to read, study, and teach publickly and privately, and go before the people in practice, that they may say with Paul, "Follow me as I follow Christ."

"I wish, he adds, there were many more such Clergymen as Mr.——— Surely there is very great necessity. The people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Lord send forth more labourers, for the harvest is very great, and labourers few."

"Jan. 16. Mr.———one of Lady Huntington's ministers, preached here. He is a pretty speaker, and I think his preaching is calculated to do good. He addresses sinners pretty freely, in order to alarm, awaken, convince, and convert them. Such a strain of preaching is likely to be useful."

"June 17. 1795. Mr.———preached, (a Calvinist Baptist.) He is a sensible serious man; a very deliberate speaker, of a courteous behaviour and candid disposition."

"July 31. 1781. Mr.———(an independent minister) preached.—He appears a very serious, good man. I wish he would preach extempore. It would be more acceptable to many."

"Dec. 8. 1785.———Esq; a justice of
the

the peace, dropped down dead in the street, as he was returning home in the evening. He was a Gentleman of good abilities in the law, and an useful Magistrate. He will be much wanted in this town. How suddenly does death often come! How necessary to be always ready! May I endeavour to improve this providence for my own advantage, and that of others!"

Mr. THOMPSON'S diary abounds with hints of this kind, expressive of his candour and affection towards those who differed widely from him, in various points of faith and practice. Some other instances will be naturally given in the following section, when he makes observations on the deaths of good men of various denominations. A resolution which he wrote Aug. 12. 1786, will, I think, be a proper conclusion of the present section.

"I do resolve from this time henceforward to the latest period of my life, to endeavour to live in peace, love and friendship with all good men, of every party, name and sentiment. As I claim the right of private judgment, and to think for myself, all other men have an equal right to the same. It is every man's birthright to have liberty of conscience, and no man has any right to deprive another of it.—It is very amiable to speak cautiously of every person's character. If we cannot say what is good and commendable of them, *say nothing.*

in

In this case of speaking concerning others, how few are there who do to others as they wish others would do to, and speak of them."

S E C T. VI.

Mr. THOMPSON's Remarks on the Lives and Deaths of others.

This, as we have hinted above, was a frequent practice, in which he took pleasure, and the nature of these remarks discovered his candour and piety. We select only a few out of many.

"Nov. 22. 1766. Had the melancholy news of a nephew of my wife's being killed on the fifteenth of this month, at a sugar-house in Hull. Alas! how suddenly does death often come, without warning! how necessary is it for us to be found always ready, for we know neither the day nor the hour when the Lord will call us. However, I trust, he was a gracious young man.* I hope he was in a state of habitual readiness for death; and that is a great blessing."

"Jan. 20. 1767. I have been reading the excellent life of Dr. Doddridge; and I find abundant reason to be ashamed and humbled, when I think what a christian, as well as a minister, he was: how devout! how diligent in improving time! in prayer, in reading, in self-examination, studying, writing, preaching,

instructing, in private visits, &c. Ah me ! what poor improvements do I make, as a christian and as a minister ! Lord forgive me, quicken me, and stir me up to greater zeal and diligence !”

“ June 10. 1767. Mr. Watts, (the Calvinist Baptist minister in Boston) died, after two days illness. How short the warning ! O my soul ! am I actually ready for death’s approach ? May nothing discompose my mind, or unfit me for close communion with God, and actual readiness for death and heaven ! Watch and pray, and look for death *daily*, for I know neither the day nor the hour when it will come. O may I glorify God living and dying ; in time and eternity.”

“ Nov. 5. 1767. This morning, I had the news of the death of Dr. Wood of Norwich, an independent minister of note. He preached twice in our meeting-house in 1764. How frequently do we hear of deaths ! Our fathers, where are they ! ere long my friends will have the news of my death. Let me stand in daily readiness ! May I die in the Lord !

“ Jan. 21. 1768. We had the news of the death of both Mr. Taylor’s children, of the small-pox. A very alarming stroke of Providence to tender parents, to have two sweet babes snatched away by death, both together ! May we remember that our child is mortal too, and
may

may soon be taken away from us. Well, I hope we are all the Lord's, and therefore if we should any of us be called away by death, I hope we shall enter into glory. O let this consideration comfort my soul, that I have reason to believe that I and my dear wife are true believers in Jesus Christ; and therefore pardoned, justified, adopted, renewed, and heirs of glory. And our child is yet in childhood, and therefore we may be comforted in her happiness should she die. O pleasing thought of meeting in our heavenly Father's house above, where there is fulness of joy, and unspeakable pleasures for evermore. Rejoice and exult, my soul, in hope of the glory of God! There, O there, the weary are for ever at rest."

"April 20. 1768, I was sent for to preach a Funeral-Sermon at Coningsby, Mr Boyce being poorly. I went and preached from Mat. xxv. 13. to a very great croud of people. I hurt myself by speaking so loud as that they might hear in and out of the meeting-house. I am now very poorly of my old complaint in my breast. Somebody will have my Funeral-Sermon to preach by and by. Well, be it so, may I but finish my course with joy, and arrive safe in my Father's house above, and all shall then be well for evermore."

"April 22. 1768. I was informed of the death of Mr. Bloomfield of North-Clifton; I
hope

hope, a very gracious man, by whose conversation, I formerly received benefit. Thus are the Saints removed one after another, from earth to heaven, where, at last, they shall all meet, and live, and reign together for ever and ever."

" Nov. 7. 1768. My father was taken speechless, as he was going by water to Gainfborough-market. He laid speechless till the 13th, and then died. A messenger was sent for me. I went on the Friday before he died; but he could not speak to me. He was in his 78th year; and I hope came to his grave in a very good old age, ripe for eternal glory. I have no reason to question his happiness. I believe he has walked with God for many years, and now, I trust he has safely arrived at the haven of rest, after a long and toilsome passage through the sea of this world.—I have reason to believe that my first convictions were occasioned by my dear father's reproofs and admonitions. At one time he sent for me from a dancing; and when I came home, he very tenderly, and with earnestness said to this purpose. " O that my head was water, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night on thy account : " which had a great effect upon my mind. May I take the same method of reproving my child and others, that I may have under my care. For though the
advice

advice may not be immediately taken, yet it may be of service afterwards ; after many days or years."

" My dear father was much delighted with my company, preaching, and letters, after I was employed in the work of the ministry. His sorrow that he had before on my account, was turned into joy. And I hope ere long we shall meet again in heaven, and rejoice in our Father's house for ever. O what a blessed meeting will that be, when dear relatives, and intimate friends shall meet in glory, and never, never part more ! O how ravishing !

" Nov. 12. 1771. This morning I have felt a heavy stroke of divine providence in the death of my dearly beloved brother in Christ, William Veall, Junr. a very gracious young man, and a promising young preacher. He was awakened to a sense of his danger when very young, and was admitted a member of our church in the sixteenth year of his age. As his convictions were not so strong as some others spake of, he used to fear he was not a true penitent. But the Lord gave him such a view of Jesus, and of his great salvation, that he was sometimes almost overpowered with a sense of his own vileness, and Jesus's love and grace. He used to say that he had such confidence in the Lord that he had no settled doubts of his salvation : only sometimes he was afraid lest he should be
deceived

deceived, because he had no doubts and fears, which many spake of."

" I believe he walked closely with God, and often had sweet communion with him. He had exercised his gifts in private a long time ; and for about twelve months before his death, he preached in public, pretty frequently, on the Lord's-day evenings ; first in the vestry, and then in the meeting-house. He was called to Gosberton and Spalding, and was liked much there. His last text was, Rev. i. 7. Behold he cometh with clouds, &c. In his last illness, which was a high inflammatory fever, and laid much on his spirits, he was troubled with timidity and many fears ; which I think was much owing to his violent disorder affecting his head and nerves. Lord, what is man ! I dearly loved him ; for I believe he was one of my spiritual children, whom I had begotten to God, through the Gospel. But, hush Nature ! the Lord hath called him to his arms. His sovereign will be done. He does all things well ; and this we shall see and know hereafter. May the stroke be sanctified to me, to his surviving relations, and to all his Christian friends ! Prepare each of us, good Lord, for the awful change, that when death comes, we may have nothing to do, but to die in peace. Amen."

" Aug. 17. 1787, I received the news of the death of my beloved brother, Mr. *John Grimley*,
many

many years pastor of a General Baptist Church at Loughborough in Leicestershire, who died the 12th instant. He was a wise, judicious, good minister of Jesus Christ ; and, I doubt not, has finished his course with joy. The Tuesday before he died, he preached a funeral sermon, from 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. " I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, &c." This was a remarkable circumstance, and was like preaching his own funeral sermon. May this stroke be sanctified to many ministers and churches, and to me in particular ! O that I may stand always prepared for the summons !

" Sep. 17. 1787, Died Ann Wright, a good young woman, a member of our church, who had been baptized about five years, and was a steady, serious, tender-minded, conscientious young person ; for whom I had a very great regard. How happy would it be for ministers of Christ, if all church members were like-minded ! This good young woman was about twenty-four years of age, when she made a profession of religion, and about twenty-nine, when she died. I think she appeared to have drank as deep into the spirit of Jesus Christ, as most persons I was ever acquainted with. Her behaviour as a servant, and a church-member was obliging, obedient, and conscientious. She was

L

well

well prepared, I believe, for death and heaven ; wished to leave a sinful world, and was not afraid to die ; but said she should be happy. When dying, she said, " What is this, compared with what my Saviour bore for me ?" O let me also die the death of the righteous ! Solomon says, " A woman that feareth the Lord shall be praised." Surely this young woman highly deserved praise ; and was worthy of being imitated by us all. I would highly recommend her, as an example to all young persons."

In this manner he continually improved visitations by the deaths of his friends, or any with whom he had a particular connection. It is scarcely necessary to remark, that while his observations on such occasions demonstrate his piety, they contain hints to others, worthy of being remembered. His observations on the deaths of Ministers, and others, whose religious sentiments differed much from his own, give further evidence both of his piety and his candour. A few of these shall suffice.

" Nov. 10. I received the melancholy news of the death of the Rev. Mr. *George Whitfield*, who died at Newbury Port, about forty miles from Boston in New England, on the 30th of September. He was a very diligent, and most indefatigable minister of the gospel. England seemed too small for him. He often went over into America, to preach the gospel to the numerous

numerous inhabitants of our Colonies. Perhaps he was instrumental of converting more sinners than any one man in this age. His crown, will, no doubt, be very bright. O may I be enabled to follow his example, so far as my strength, ability, and opportunity may permit. Lord, raise up many like him, to sound the gospel trumpet aloud, to alarm poor, lost perishing sinners!" He concludes with a poem by way of congratulation of Mr. Whitfield on his arrival in Heaven; and on the labours he went through on earth. But as Mr. Thompson made no pretensions to poetical talents, this is omitted.

"May 17. 1785. Died the Rev. Mr. *John Calthorp*, Vicar of Boston, aged 67 years. A man of much courtesy and affability of temper and address, and who bore a good moral character. He always behaved to me in a kind, obliging manner. He had been minister of this parish for more than thirty years. Thus death removes one after another. O may I be found prepared for the important change! Then death will be an infinite blessing, come when it will."

On the death of that well known, eminently pious, and benevolent gentleman, *John Thornton*, Esq; Mr. Thompson writes at large: from which the Reader will not be displeased with the following extract:

L 2

"Nov.

“ Nov. 30. 1790. I find by the public papers, that on the 7th of this month, died at Bath, JOHN THORNTON, Esq; that truly benevolent gentleman : who from the year 1764, to the year 1784, was kind enough to correspond with me, and send me money, books, and drugs, to dispose of among the poor in this town and neighbourhood. I have about thirty of his letters by me, and several of them very valuable ones.

“ I received much money from him, to distribute on various occasions ; to relieve the poor, to assist ministers in travelling to spread the gospel, to build and enlarge meeting-houses, &c. In the course of twenty years, 289l. 10s. besides a vast number of books, and large quantities of drugs.

“ What a friend to the poor ! What a friend to me and mine ! It is supposed he distributed £3000 a year, in various charities, in different parts of the world. They say he began the world with £100 000, and died worth £600 000. Thus providence smiled on his circumstances, that it appears “ The more he gave away, the more he had.” What an example to others was this good man ! May many be desirous to imitate him ! In Sept. 1785. I preached in his house at Clapham, to Mr. and Mrs. Thornton ; and two sons, who are members of Parliament, Rev. Mr. Johnson, a young Clergyman, who

is since gone to Botany Bay, to preach to the convicts there ; and to fifteen of Mr. Thornton's Servants. These composed my audience. — Good man ! He is got through this ensnaring world. He was very useful in life ; and, I hope, died safe, and happy in the Lord !”

“ Mr. Thornton has left three sons, all Members of Parliament, and one daughter : I wish they may walk in their Father's steps, and imitate his excellent example.”

On the death of Mr. Wesley, he thus writes “ March 2. 1791. In the 88th year of his age, died the Rev. John Wesley, the founder and principal leader of the Methodists. He was born at Epworth, in the Isle of Axholme, in 1703. His Father was the Clergyman of that town. He was educated at Oxford, and before he left the College, he and other young men formed parties for devotional exercises. When he came out, his preaching being different from that of the Clergy in general, he and Mr. Whitefield were soon denied the use of the Churches ; and therefore began to preach in Moorfields, &c.

“ Mr. Wesley, for many years past, has had a great number of lay-preachers under him, and solely at his direction : and having built a vast number of Meeting-houses, through the nation, he had many societies of people at his com-

mand, who were subject to his authority and controul."

He was a strong Episcopalian and Arminian; kept his people to the established Church, and opposed the tenets of Calvinists most powerfully. I hope Mr. Wesley was an useful man in these Kingdoms."

I shall conclude this part of Mr. Thompson's character with his observations on the death of the Countess of Huntingdon.

"June 17. 1791. died the Right Honourable the Countess Dowager of Huntingdon, aged eighty-five years. This lady has rendered herself famous in the religious world by patronizing a branch of the Methodists. i. e. the Calvinist part of the Methodists, for a number of years past. She built meeting-houses, and sent out preachers into different parts of Great-Britain and Ireland: and was, I suppose, a very religious good lady.

"N.B. Mr. Thornton died, Nov. 1790. Mr. Wesley, March, 1791, and the old Countess, June 1791, three noted persons among the professors of religion in this nation. Well, Jesus, the Head of the Church ever lives; and has promised to all his followers "Because I live, ye shall live also," and has said that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against his Church, which is founded upon a Rock."

S E C T. VII.

Mr. THOMPSON's *Remarks on particular Events and Occurrences in Life; and his grateful acknowledgment of Divine Favours.*

Scarcely any event took place, of which Mr. THOMPSON was apprized, on which he did not make some pious and profitable observations. From these the reader will not be displeased with a few extracts.

“ March 1, 2, 3, 4, 1769. I attended the Lincoln Assizes, where, amongst other things, I heard the trial of a man for murder, who was brought in guilty, and condemned to suffer death according to Law.

“ Let me remember, that I, and all the human race have transgressed the law of God; and according to the tenor of that law, we all deserve to die eternally. What a mercy that the Lord does not deal with us according to our deserts! That by the gospel there is pardon proclaimed to rebels doomed to die. My soul,

“ Fly to the hope the gospel gives;

“ The man that trusts the promise lives.”

“ An earthly Assize bears some very faint resemblance of the great Assize, or Judgment-day. How awful to see a poor criminal proved guilty, and to hear sentence of death passed upon him at man's bar! But how much more
awful

awful to see millions of guilty creatures at the bar of God ; and to hear them sentenced with a “ Go ye cursed ! ” O may I, at that great Assize, stand amongst those whom the Judge will acquit, and who shall be welcomed into his kingdom with a “ Come ye blessed of my Father ! ”

“ March 31, 1778. The winter is now almost gone, and the spring begins to make it's appearance. O that winter may be over with my soul ; and may the sun of Righteousness arise upon me with his chearing and enlivening beams ! Lord deliver me from cold and frozen affections, from perplexing fears, and from the power of sinful lusts and passions ! O how desirable is the heavenly state ! The blessed spirits there have dropped the flesh into the grave, and are freed from indwelling sin, and from all burdens, pains, and sorrows which they complained of while here below. Their happiness is consummated, their holiness is perfect ; and all they do is done with warm and devout affections. Without wandering, without any kind of imperfection.

“ O how I long for heaven, because it is a state of perfect holiness, as well as of perfect joy and felicity ! There shall I know perfectly, love perfectly, praise and serve God perfectly ; and shall no more be perplexed with a stupid intentible mind, with cold and frozen affections,
with

with wandering thoughts, with lusts and sinful passions, as I am here in this wilderness."

"O for faith and patience to be kept in lively exercise, while I am conflicting here with sin, temptations, and various enemies. Lord support me, comfort me, and bear me up, lest I faint and grow weary; lest I sink into despair, and fall into a state dishonourable to thee, and unworthy of a christian! Lord help and save me, for thy name's sake!"

"Aug. 28. 1780. *Five weeks dry weather.*

We look for rain with longing eyes :
But all our longing looks are vain,
Until the Lord command it down.

Poor helpless man! not a single drop canst thou, with all thy boasted powers produce. See thy impotence, and know thy sole dependence upon the Lord, for life, and all the common things which life requires. It stays so long, to make it welcome when it comes. We seldom know the worth of any good but by it's want; and wanting long makes it more gratefully received.

"In the midst of a long drought we have had fine harvest weather, ever since the harvest began; for which we have abundant reason to be thankful. It is a great mercy to mankind."

"Sep. 8. 1780. After about seven weeks dry weather, we have now had a fine rain, very much

much wanted ; and it is come mild and seasonable, without tempest. Blessed be the Lord for so great a mercy."

" Sep. 11. 1780. We are now distracted with a contested election at Boston. How assiduous and indefatigable are men in securing a place in the British Senate ! Ought not Christians to be much more so about making their calling and election sure ? I preached yesterday on 2 Peter i. 10, 11. by way of improving this occurrence to spiritual purposes ?"

" Feb. 7. 1784 We have but lately concluded a most expensive and ruinous war with North-America, France, Spain, and Holland. Now peace is restored to a distracted and distressed empire, we should improve it in repairing our finances, maintaining our National Credit, and promoting our Commerce with America, &c. But instead of this our Counsels are divided and distracted ; and some of the greatest men in the kingdom for abilities, are contending with each other, I fear, for power and places, more than the good of the Commonwealth."

" What a poor, unhappy Nation we are ! The good Lord look upon us, be merciful to us, heal our breaches, unite our Counsels, and save us from destroying ourselves by our folly and madness !

" What

“ What a fluctuating world is this ! Let us be looking to a more permanent state, to a kingdom unshaken, which cannot be moved.

Where wars and commotions, dissension and animosities never come. But where all is peace and harmony, concord and affection uninterrupted, for evermore ! Blessed state ! ”

“ July 7. 1784. . This evening a grand Air Balloon was launched from the grand Sluice at Boston, in the presence of a great number of spectators ; who, while it was filling, waited with eager expectations. I thought it a lively emblem of the world ; which is but an airy phantom, and yet has many admirers, who have raised expectations ;, but like the Spectators, this afternoon, always meet with a disappointment in the end. After waiting very long, the balloon rose for two or three minutes ; but soon fell to the ground again. So the world appears for a short space before our wondering eyes ; but alas ! it soon sinks, and we lose sight of it forever.

“ O let us look off all airy bubbles, all transitory things ; and fix our minds on things permanent and durable as our souls and eternity. Let me do this for myself ; and O may others attend to it also ! ”

Feb. 8. 1786. “ The sixth of last month, the Halsewell East-Indiaman, Captain Pearce was wrecked on the coast of Dorsetshire, when,
out

out of two hundred and forty persons, only twenty-three escaped. The Captain, and two of his daughters, with five other young ladies, perished with the wreck. It was a dreadful storm of wind and snow from the south, or south-east; and the ship drove ashore, against a most tremendous rock. The sea ran amazing high; so that it was with great difficulty that any of the people were saved.

“ This was a very awful catastrophe. The Captain, with most astonishing resolution, chose to perish with his two daughters, rather than attempt to save himself by leaving the ship.

“ They sailed the first day of the month, with a fair wind, and fine prospects, but on the morning of the second, were cast away as above. How uncertain are all worldly things! O, to have a more substantial and an everlasting portion!”

“ Jan. 13. 1789. Memorandum concerning the King.—George the III. The King was very poorly in the summer, and went to Cheltenham Bath, or Spaw, for the restoration of his health; and appeared better. But Nov. 1st, that year, some symptoms of insanity appeared. On the 5th of November, the very day of our commemorating the Revolution effected by the Prince of Orange, who landed in Torbay, Nov. 5. 1688.—on that memorable day

day GEORGE the Third, in the fiftieth year of his age, and the twenty-fifth of his reign, appeared a lunatic! What an awful visitation! "All flesh is grass." Verily man in his best estate is vanity." Put not your trust in princes." They are poor mortal worms.

"The Parliament have, for some weeks, been employed about settling the affair of a Regent, to act in the room of his Majesty, and as his Representative; as the executive power, and the third branch of the Legislature of Great-Britain. GEORGE Prince of Wales, who was twenty-six years of age, Aug. 12 1788, is likely to be appointed Regent during the King's illness. May a wise and gracious Providence direct and over-rule all our national affairs at this critical juncture!"

"April 23. 1789. This day was appointed by Government, to be kept as a day of public thanksgiving for the King's recovery from his insanity. I preached from Psalm cvii. 1. In the evening the town was illuminated on the joyful occasion. Bless the Lord for this signal interposition of his indulgent Providence in favour of the kingdom, at this critical time!"

Numerous indeed, are the instances in which he puts down his observations on what passed in the course of Providence, and of what he saw and heard of in the world. I believe the pious reader will agree with me, that they discover a gracious disposition. But I would not multi-

ply them to excess. The following extract, however, on reading the History of England, gives us a slight view of his political sentiments, and may be a proper conclusion of the present section.

“Sept. 25. 1790. In reading the History of England, it appears that there never was a period any thing comparable to the time since the happy Revolution by the Prince of Orange, in 1688. I had the happiness of being born in 1735, about the middle of that period, and in the glorious reign of George II. one of the best of Monarchs, and I have now lived about thirty years in the Reign of George III. which two reigns have, on many accounts, been very happy, except the *American War*, which is the greatest blot and misfortune of the present reign. But compared with many former reigns, both before and since the Reformation, it is a very happy period indeed. We enjoy many civil and sacred privileges. We have Peace and Plenty; gospel light, and civil and religious Liberty; and many blessings for which we ought to be thankful.”

S E C T. VIII.

Mr. THOMPSON's *ardent desires and endeavours to be holy and useful.*

WHEN divine Grace operates effectually on the mind, it not only produces peace and joy,
but

but also a holy disposition ; and an earnest desire to increase in holiness. Hence one character of those whom our Saviour pronounces happy, is, " They hunger and thirst after righteousness." That this was eminently exemplified in Mr. Thompson, was manifest in his habitual disposition, and is discovered in every part of his diary. We may conclude our account of his life and character, with a few extracts, which will make it evident to the reader.

" July 2. 1765. I have this morning been comfortable and lively in prayer, both in secret and in my family devotions. O for more fervent love ! I find much want of a simple, humble, teachable disposition, both in myself and others. O for a primitive Spirit to be revived in churches, in families, and in particular persons ! Let me endeavour every day to live, to love, to watch, to pray, to walk, and act, more and more like those of old ! Away with modern, fashionable religion ! It's a thief, a cheat, an imposture, a lie ! Lord deliver me from it !"

" Oct. 18. 1768. I would endeavour to walk more watchfully, and guard against a light, trifling disposition, to which I am so naturally prone. O that I could always set the Lord before me ; and act, and think, and speak, as in his immediate presence, at all times. Let me often read, and meditate on the 139th Psalm.

Let me often remember, that “ the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good ;” and that he “ searcheth the heart.”

“ June 25. 1771. O that I could do more for him who has done so much for me ! I want, when I preach, to speak more simply ; to aim at doing good to my hearers. How often does *Self* creep in—“ How shall I speak to be applauded !”—Oh !—

“ That monster PRIDE !—that busy sin
Spoils all that I perform :
Curst Pride, that creeps securely in,
And swells a haughty worm !”

Lord deliver me from it : Make me, and keep me humble, like a little child. From pride and vain glory, good Lord deliver me ; and clothe me with humility as with a garment.”

The following extract not only discovers his piety, and ardent desire after universal holiness, but gives us a kind of paraphrase on Ephes. vi. 12—18. a very important part of scripture, with which every Christian ought to be familiarly acquainted.

“ July 18. 1778. The Christian Life, from its beginning to its close, is a spiritual warfare, a continued conflict with sin, unbelief, pride, self-righteousness, corruptions, temptations ; with world, flesh, and Devil ; and there is no cessation of arms in this war.

CHRIST

“CHRIST is the Commander in chief, the Captain of our salvation ; and every real Christian is enlisted under his banner, and is furnished with spiritual armour, i. e. The *girdle* of TRUTH—Truth of grace, sincerity and uprightness of mind : the *breastplate* of imputed, imparted, and practical RIGHTEOUSNESS : The feet *shod* with PEACE ; that is, the Mind fortified with peace and courage, fitted to encounter difficulties : Using constantly the *shield* of FAITH, depending on the promises for support, and confiding in Jesus for every thing ; looking by faith to the immortal crown, resisting by faith, the Devil, and all his *fiery darts*, cast in malice, in order to wound our souls. Having on the *helmet* of lively HOPE, to guard us against despair and fear. Ever making constant use of the Spirit’s *sword* ; which is the WORD OF GOD : Praying, *with all prayer*, for every promised blessing, and *watching* the motions of every enemy, lest we should at any time be surprized and overcome unawares.

“Thus equipped, we must stand on our ground, against all our adversaries, and be determined to conquer or die in the conflict ; until, by divine grace, we are made more than conquerors over all our enemies, through our glorious Captain, who has loved us, and promised to them that overcome, an immortal, never-fading crown.”

“ O my soul ! how goes this warfare on with thee ? Art thou fighting manfully under Jesus’s banner, against all thy enemies, resolutely determined, by grace, to conquer, and wear the crown of life, which Jesus has to bestow on all his soldiers, in the day of his coming ! ”

Mr. Thompson frequently lamented, as all good ministers undoubtedly do, the low state of religion in the church and in the world ; and the negligence of professors in general, and of Ministers in particular. On these occasions, he used often to form resolutions as to his own conduct. Having (May 30. 1786) attended a small meeting of Ministers, who, as he apprehended, conducted things in a very trifling manner, he puts down in his diary, an account of their conduct ; and then adds, “ O what poor lifeless work it is ! How long will Ministers and Churches sleep at this sad rate ! When shall we act like those who make religion every thing, and every thing of religion ? O when shall the wise virgins slumber no more ; but every one be employed in trimming his lamp, and making ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus ? Ministers had need exert themselves in rousing the people to diligence and watchfulness, zeal and activity in the service of God ? May I and my dear people be kept alive and lively, comfortable and prosperous in our souls ; in a waiting frame, and ready posture
of

of mind, whenever the summons shall be heard, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh : Go ye out to meet him !*

“ What method can I pursue, in order to be most useful at home and abroad. by preaching and conversation, doctrine and life ? Let me study continually what I ought to do, in order to be useful. This is the end of our living ; and there is nothing worth living for, but to be useful, in the family, the closet, and the world. Let me redeem time ; read my Bible, preach, visit my people at home ; and be ready to labour abroad, whenever there is a call for assistance.”

“ Aug. 7. 1786. What a perfect warfare is the Christian life ! I have now been engaged in it for thirty years and upwards ; and I still find the conflict as sharp as ever. I apprehend it will only end with my life. However, it is my determinate resolution not to give up the contest until I gain a victory over all opposition, and am made conqueror, and more than conqueror, through him who has loved me.”

“ I desire to make advances in the divine life ; and not to rest satisfied with any present attainments. Indeed I have attained to very little. Alas ! what evil propensities have I yet to subdue ! How many lusts and passions do I yet feel ! What languid graces, what imperfect duties have I to lament over !

I am

“ I am falling out with myself every day, on account of one thing or another, of which I am conscious. O how happy are they who have got safe to the regions above !

Their Warfare is o'er,
Their Toil is no more :

for they are perfectly holy and happy, and perfect in love.

“ It was the language of my dear wife, when dying, “ O the day ! O the day when free from sinning !” All men wish for heaven, to be happy ; but a real Christian desires Heaven, because there he shall *sin no more*. Many things here make unhappy, but sin is the worst of all. It is the *original* cause, as well as the *present* cause of our unhappiness, pain, and sorrow ; and will be so, while we are in these bodies.”

The following extracts are a proof that Mr. Thompson was sincerely concerned for the welfare of other parties besides that with which he was connected ; and may suggest a valuable hint to other professors, especially to other ministers.

“ Jan 29, 1787. Last night, in my waking hours, I was led to survey the several religious interests at Bolton ; and it appeared to me that vital religion is in a very low condition. I hoped there might be a few truly gracious, praying, conscientious persons of each party, who might, with me, lament the sad declensions
which

which appear. I was ready to wish that these could be brought to keep up a prayer-meeting, in order to the revival of true religion in this town. My mind was very sensibly affected with these things: I thought thereon, and wept."

The last extract I shall insert from my friend's Diary, contains a resolution to improve conversation in friendly visits. In this, and in every other good design, and holy effort, I pray that he may be imitated by all his surviving brethren in the ministry.

"June 28. 1788. When christians meet at each other's houses, by way of friendly visiting, it is a great pity those social interviews should be spent in worldly or trifling conversation; and scarcely a word of God or Religion mentioned for hours together; News, weather, trade, crops, horses, oxen, sheep, markets, fairs, dress, childrens play, and chit-chat, engross most of the precious time. Let me attempt to remedy this evil, by proposing some question of importance, of a religious nature, for the consideration of the company, as a subject of conversation. For instance; what are the best proofs of the divinity of the Bible? Wherein is the Christian Dispensation superior to that of the Law? Wherein are all real Christians agreed? What is a certain proof of an unconverted state? What are real scriptural
evi-

evidences of sound conversion? What is the best evidence of growth in grace? In what will the happiness of Heaven chiefly consist? &c."

I beg leave to say, that, however insignificant such designs may appear to some, or however rigid and severe such a conduct may appear to others, it will certainly be found at last, when "by our words we shall be justified; and by our words we shall be condemned," that no one will have reason to repent of having endeavoured to promote a conversation which is always good, to the use of edifying, and which may minister grace to the hearers."

It is not pretended that Mr. Thompson had no imperfections. We have seen in the course of these Memoirs, frequent acknowledgments that he was not completely what he wished to be. This has generally been most sincerely acknowledged by the best of men, for these best know themselves, and are most conscientious. Our friend was one of Adam's degenerate race. The good which was in him, was by the grace of God. By that grace he lived above the reigning power of sin, and made a progress in holiness worthy of our imitation.

That a person so deeply convinced of the "sinfulness of sin," so deeply affected with the depravity of human nature, so affectionate in his regards for Christ, and for all true believers, of every denomination, so conscientious in the
practice

practice of self-examination, and so ardent in the pursuit of holiness, should at last die in peace and comfort, might naturally be expected. A letter which I received from him, less than a month before his decease, discovers that tranquility and peace of mind, and that submission to the will of his heavenly Father, which does honour to the gospel and grace of God; and may justly excite gratitude in the minds of his surviving friends.

A letter from Mrs. Thompson, the mourning Widow, dated Feb. 12th 1794, the day after Mr. Thompson's Interment, contains, among other necessary things, the following account of his death. "He exchanged this mortal life for an immortal one, on Friday last, (the 7th Instant,) about nine o'clock in the morning, after a long afflicted state of weakness and pain.—Those truths of christianity which he so frequently inculcated, in his preaching, in a doctrinal, practical, and experimental way, as they were his spiritual strength through life, they were his support in death; and he bore a dying testimony to the excellency of the gospel of Christ, as the only foundation of a sinner's hope, and expressed a comfortable assurance of his own interest in the promises it contains."

An extract from a letter of Mrs. Anderson, the only daughter of Mr. Thompson, dated Feb. 21. further expresses the tranquillity of
mind

mind with which our valuable friend and brother finished his course. Speaking of the church at Boston, she adds—"That people, Sir, lay very near the heart of my dear parent. I never, that I know of, heard him express the least desire for longer continuance in this poor world, only on their account. "If he might stay a few weeks, and see a good minister of Jesus Christ fixed among them. But, as thou wilt. The Lord knows what is best."—His afflictions were heavy; but his consolations also were great. He appeared quite ready, and longing for that happy country he had so often spoke of, where *the wicked cease from troubling, and the wicked are at rest.*"

I have laid before the reader this account of a minister for whom I had the sincerest affection, with all the simplicity I could, that it might be useful and agreeable to the meanest; and conclude with ardent wishes that the surviving widow, daughter, and other relatives of my dear friend, now among the blessed above, that those who were the people of his charge, that the minister who may succeed him, that every reader of these pages, and that the compiler of them, may be happy in the same redeeming grace in which he gloried, may imitate the example of Christ, as he did, and may at last, appear with him, before the presence of our blessed Redeemer's glory, with exceeding joy. Amen.

THE END.

The following
in 1780,
the Rev.
by the R.
ty. The
the band
the prece
here rep

F
T
Th
A
Slo
I
No
Th
Th
No
He
V
H
W
T
W
B
T

The following verses were printed, with the Title Epitaphium, in 1780, after the Funeral Sermon for that amiable man, the Rev. Mr. James Hartley, of Haworth in Yorkshire, by the Rev. Mr. Crabtree of Bradford, in the same county. They have been printed separately since; and fell into the hands of Mr. Thompson's friends, who sung them at the preaching of his Funeral Sermon, and wish to have them here reprinted.

EPITAPHIUM.

FAR from affliction, toil and care,
The happy soul is fled:
The breathless clay shall slumber here,
Amongst the silent dead.

Slowly his earthly frame decay'd,
His end was long in sight;
Not was his steady soul afraid
To take her awful flight.

The gospel was his joy and song,
E'en to his latest breath;
The truths he had maintain'd so long
Were his support in death.

Now he resides where Jesus is,
Above this dusky sphere:
He was no stranger to the bliss,
While he sojourned here.

His body rests beneath the ground,
Till that tremendous day,
When the last trump shall give the sound,
To rouse his sleeping clay.

The church's loss we all deplore;
And shed the falling tear;
We shall behold his face no more,
Till Jesus shall appear.

But we are hast'ning to the tomb;
O may we ready stand!
Then, dearest Lord, receive us home,
To dwell at thy right hand.

mind with which our valuable friend and brother finished his course. Speaking of the church at Boston, she adds—"That people, Sir, lay very near the heart of my dear parent. I never, that I know of, heard him express the least desire for longer continuance in this poor world, only on their account. "If he might stay a few weeks, and see a good minister of Jesus Christ fixed among them. But, as thou wilt. The Lord knows what is best."—His afflictions were heavy; but his consolations also were great. He appeared quite ready, and longing for that happy country he had so often spoke of, where *the wicked cease from troubling, and the wicked are at rest.*"

I have laid before the reader this account of a minister for whom I had the sincerest affection, with all the simplicity I could, that it might be useful and agreeable to the meanest; and conclude with ardent wishes that the surviving widow, daughter, and other relatives of my dear friend, now among the blessed above, that those who were the people of his charge, that the minister who may succeed him, that every reader of these pages, and that the compiler of them, may be happy in the same redeeming grace in which he gloried, may imitate the example of Christ, as he did, and may at last, appear with him, before the presence of our blessed Redeemer's glory, with exceeding joy. Amen.

THE END.

*The following
in -8c,
the Rev.
by the R.
ty The
the bond
the pre
here rep*

F
T
Th
A
Slo
I
No
Th
Th
No
He
V
H
W
T
W
B
T

The following verses were printed, with the Title Epitaphium, in 1780, after the Funeral Sermon for that amiable man, the Rev. Mr. James Hartley, of Harworth in Yorkshire, by the Rev. Mr. Crabtree of Bradford, in the same county. They have been printed separately since; and fell into the hands of Mr. Thompson's friends, who sung them at the preaching of his Funeral Sermon, and wish to have them here reprinted.

EPITAPHIUM.

FAR from affliction, toil and care,
The happy soul is fled:
The breathless clay shall slumber here,
Amongst the silent dead.
Slowly his earthly frame decay'd,
His end was long in sight;
Nor was his steady soul afraid
To take her awful flight.
The gospel was his joy and song,
E'en to his latest breath;
The truths he had maintain'd so long
Were his support in death.
Now he resides where Jesus is,
Above this dusky sphere:
He was no stranger to the bliss,
While he sojourned here.
His body rests beneath the ground,
Till that tremendous day,
When the last trump shall give the sound,
To rouse his sleeping clay.
The church's loss we all deplore,
And shed the falling tear;
We shall behold his face no more,
Till Jesus shall appear.
But we are hast'ning to the tomb;
O may we ready stand!
Then, dearest Lord, receive us home,
To dwell at thy right hand.

CONTENTS.

Page

PREFACE.	3
DISCOURSE on 2 Cor. xiii. 11.	7
The EXHORTATION illustrated	10
Be perfect	14
Be of good comfort	20
Be of one mind	30
Life in peace	37
The Motive by which it is enforced	50
God is "the God of Love and Peace"	52
Churches happy by the presence of God	ib.
Means are necessary	53
The means will be successful	ib.
Important general Remark	54
IMPROVEMENT—The Purity and Jealousy of God	55
Churches ought to seek the presence of God	57
Carnal Professors injurious to Christianity	ib.
Character of useful Ministers and Church Members	58

MEMOIRS.

SECT. I. General view of Mr. Thompson's Life and Ministry till his Ordination	63
SECT. II. An account of his Ordination, and the views which he then had, and afterwards retained of the ministerial work	81
SECT. III. His struggles and doubts, respecting the truth of his conversion, and his interest in Christ; and the means he used for satisfaction	91
SECT. IV. His conscientious improvement of Time, and attention to the revolutions of it	101
SECT. V. His steady regard to what he apprehended to be Truth—his candour towards those from whom he differed: and his grief on account of contentions among Christians	107
SECT. VI. His remarks on the Lives and Deaths of others	115
SECT. VII. His remarks on particular events, and occurrences in life; and his grateful acknowledgments of Divine Favours.	127
SECT. VIII. His ardent desires and endeavours after holiness and usefulness	134
Brief account of Mr. Thompson's Death.	142



